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BOUGHT WITH MONEY
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SALE OF DUPLICATES

HOWARD PINCKNEY.

A NOVEL.

BY FRANCIS W. THOMAS.

AUTHOR OF "CLINTON BRADSHAW," "EAST AND WEST," &c., &c.

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HOWARD PINCKNEY.

CHAPTER I

"Am, whither away, Fitzhurst?" said Colonel Bentley to his friend as they met in a fashionable street of a certain gay metropolis; "you step as if you were carrying your skirts from a rascally haliiff, and that's more in character with me than with you."

"Colonel, how does the world treat you?" rejoined Fitzhurst, taking the proffered hand of the military gentleman of the militia,—for the command of a regiment of such soldiers had given the colonel his title.

"So, so—merely so, so," replied the colonel; "which way are you going, Fitzhurst?"

"I am walking towards the wharf," replied Fitzhurst, raising his hand from his side with a letter in it as he spoke; "I have just received this from my friend, Howard Pinckney. He has arrived in New York from England, and I expect him to spend some time with me before he returns to Charleston."

"Ah, the gentleman you travelled on the continent with, whom I have heard you speak of so often and so highly?"

"The same."

"Egad, if your account of him be true, he'll make a sensation among the fair folks—hey?"

"Yes, if he tries; but he writes as if he were worn out with excitement, and wished to get into some quiet nook and vegetate awhile. My father, in consequence of the gout, thinks he will remain in the country this coming winter. The old gentleman fears that the temptations of the table at the dinner parties in town will be too much for him. My aunt and sister will not of course leave him, and I of course must not leave them; so if Pinckney has any wish of imitating those beasts that burrow through the winter, I can accommodate him with quarters."

"'Quarters!' that's a military phrase, Fitzhurst, hey? quartering on the enemy—that's a good tale, isn't it? I must quarter somewhere, and as I don't believe I have an enemy in the world, I must quarter on my friends. Fitzhurst, I tell you that she-dragon of an aunt of mine is as close as a money-box that is only meant to receive and not to yield a cent until its dissolution, or until it bursts with the hoarding. I am almost tempted to wish her mortal,—oh! I tell you, Fitzhurst, I want the trifling matter of a hundred dollars—can't you let me have it?"

"Yes, colonel, I can accommodate you, and will do so with pleasure. I must step down to the boat, which must be in by this time, and will meet you at the hotel in half an hour."

"Fitzhurst, I shall be obliged to you."

"Not at all. Good luck to you till then, colonel," replied Fitzhurst, and they parted—the colonel proceeding directly to the hotel to await the coming of Fitzhurst, while that gentleman hastened to the wharf.

Preferring to walk, Fitzhurst had ordered Pompey, the woolly-headed official of the coachbox, to drive to the place. There he was, sure enough, propped high up in his seat, and looking with an air of aristocratic disdain upon the hacks and hackney-coachmen around. The hackmen had ordered Pompey not to approximate too closely to their stand, as they had taken upon themselves to call the right of way, and he, with much such a feeling as one of the noblesse of the ancient regime would have entertained if ordered by a mob of the canaille not to approach them, was holding back his horses in fear and contempt.

"See here, darkey," said one of them to him on observing that there was no one in the coach, "keep back and wait till your betters are served; you're sure of your load, old boy, so

just wait for it there. A little walking wont hurt'em, and if it does I'll bring 'em to you for a small charge."

"I say, Bob," called out another hackman to him who had just spoken, "twig that blackey's wool, will ye; hang me, if it don't stand out like a turkey-cock's feathers when he's a strutting, and its combed back as if the feller was a preacher. I took just such a looking feller the other day, only he had a white skin on him; dang me if I know how far—I only charged him two dollars for the ride, and he poked the new ordinance at me, and I had to let him off for fifty cents. I say, Mr Darkness (to Pompey), what will you take to take me all about town?"

Pompey disdained to reply. If any one had been sitting along side of him, he would perhaps have heard him murmur something about "white poor trash being below a coloured gentleman's notice." Nothing that Pompey said, however, reached the ears of those around. Pompey was evidently, in the abundance of his contempt, doing his best to produce the impression upon the hackmen that not a word of their's fell upon his ears, and that his eyes fell upon vacancy, though the latter organs every now and then, by a sharp glance, betrayed the fear on the part of their owner, that the hackmen might play him some scurvy trick or other.

If they entertained any such designs against Pompey's peace and dignity, they were deterred from fulfilling them, for it was at this moment that Mr Fitzhurst made his appearance, and Pompey took care to address him, and ask if he should move any farther forward. His young master said "No," and stood in the crowd, near by, watching the advance of the steam-boat, which, unlike those of the western waters, could be seen in a near bend of the harbour hurrying to its place of destination—punctual to the time at which it was advertised to appear.

Fitzhurst could not but be amused, as the boat was approaching, with the crowd about him. "Will you have a 'Gazette,' sir; the last news is in it," asked a ragged boy, poking at the same time a newspaper almost in the face of Fitzhurst. "This is the 'Courier,'" said another boy, dovetailing himself between the first vender of news and the person addressed; "it has all the news of the week, and to-day's into the bargain, and its only a 'levy'." "This, sir, is only a penny," quoth another lad, who, like his paper, was smaller than either of the others, and had contrived to get before both of them as Fitzhurst drew back to avoid the personal contact of the last supplicant.

"No, no; I want none of them," said Fitzhurst good-humouredly.

"Stand aside, boys," exclaimed a great lubber gruffly, as he edged the boys away with two large baskets that he bore on either arm containing cakes and fruit, by the sale of which he gained his livelihood. "Stand aside, you're always in the way of gentlemen." Then in a coaxing tone, after he had shoved the boys aside, he said to Fitzhurst, "Won't you have some fruit or cakes, sir?" Fitzhurst shook his head.

"Do, sir, they're very cheap;" and thrusting his right arm through the handle of the basket which he carried on that member, so as to enable him to raise the napkin from the cakes which he bore in the left-hand basket, he turned his head in the act, when the smallest boy took the opportunity slyly to slip his hand in and purloin an apple. As soon as he grasped the forbidden fruit he withdrew it so suddenly as to strike the arm of the fruitman, who turned quickly and detected him. Enraged at the theft, and having his hands occupied, the fruit-vender drew back his foot to inflict summary vengeance on the boy. As he kicked at the urchin, a hackman, standing by, raised his whip, the thong of which he held in his hand, so that it formed a loop, and caught in it the foot of the fruitman, who consequently lost his balance and pitched over on his back, scattering his fruit and cakes around like the gifts of Ceres—though certainly not making a free-will offering. On the first moment of the fellow's confusion at his mishap the boy made his escape, while the hackmen caught up hastily sundry of his cakes and apples, to save him the trouble. The moment he recovered himself they stood with their hands in their pockets, whistling and gazing at the steamboat, which had now reached the wharf, as if they were perfectly unconscious of his misfortune.

Fitzhurst had just time to offer the fellow the only consolation he could appreciate—a pecuniary consideration for his loss, when, on glancing towards the steamboat, which was now rapidly discharging her passengers, he beheld his friend, Howard Pinckney.

CHAPTER II.

It was not without reluctance that the family of Mr Fitzhurst, senior, consented to remain on his estate during the winter. That family consisted of the son whom we have already introduced to our readers, whose christian name was Sidney, a daughter, Frances, or, as she was generally called, Fanny Fitzhurst, and a maiden lady, the aunt of these two last-named individuals; a sister of Mr Fitzhurst, senior, named Rachellina Fitzhurst.

Paul was the christian name of the old gentleman. He had lately been suffering severely under an attack of the gout, and it was not without several mental struggles, in anticipating those of speech which he feared to hold with his sister on the subject, that he made up his mind, if the contest alluded to should not be too severe, that he would remain in the country. He determined, if he could not hold out, however, to capitulate upon what terms he might—perhaps yield himself a prisoner, and be taken into town.

"In the country," thought he, in turning over the advantages of the project in his own mind—"in the country I shall have my children's company more. I shall escape such an eternal round of company, for though I like company when I am well, what good does it do me when I have the gout? In town, if I go into the parlour, I must be fixed off into something like what becomes a gentleman of the old school; yes, from self-respect—for company will be constantly coming. It's not so delightful a matter to deprive myself of the comforts of a morning-gown and squeeze my limbs into the tight circumference of a coat. If I go into the parlour I feel I ought to do it, for I am not comfortable if I don't; and if I do, the gout takes possession of every limb; and then, if I remain in my room, I have no company at all. Fanny's willing to stay with me, I know, but when her friends call, she must see them—and parties—parties—she must go to parties; and if I send for Joe Hartley to come and take a game of chess with me up in my chamber, for company's sake, the fellow only irritates me. He must make, he does make, a silly move when a twitch seizes me, for I know I am the better player. He never beat me in his life when I was well, if I was in the humour for playing; and there's Sidney, he must be out and about, I don't like to confine him to the game, and what's the use of playing with him, I can always beat him, and he never cares if I do; he pays no attention to the game whatever; its throwing time away. No, no: I must stay in the country; then Fanny will be with me, and not so much company to take her off. When she goes, sister Rachellina can't attend me, and I'm left to that black jade, Beck. She tosses my bandages about and round my poor limbs as though she were playing with Rachellina's pet puppy. It don't signify; old maids are a crabbed set. I have no doubt, before I can accomplish this arrangement, the excitement and worry of mind will increase greatly my gout. But I must remain here—I must settle it the first favourable opportunity."

It was some time, however, before this favourable opportunity occurred. Miss Rachellina had suggested several alterations in the furniture, and was somewhat surprised to hear her brother instantly consent to them. On the next morning the order was given, and Pompey was despatched to the city, twenty miles off, to have it fulfilled. On Pompey's return, he brought with him a package which he said Colonel Bentley had told him to give to his master. It proved to be a splendid set of jewellery, which, without informing his daughter of his intention, Mr Fitzhurst had ordered from Paris for her.

With perhaps less of parental ostentation than he would under other circumstances have exhibited, Mr Fitzhurst presented them to Fanny. While she was looking at them and admiring them, her father, after two or three premonitory coughs, and after twisting in his huge arm-chair as if his gout was more than usually severe, said:

"Fanny, my dear daughter—ah, ah! oh, my Fanny, my dear, fix this bandage a little looser. Be very careful, my dear child, do not in mercy touch my great toe. I feel as if it were a pincushion—as if ten thousand pins and needles were running into it. Daughter, do draw the centre table a little nearer to me, and spread the map of the county on it. Ah, our country road has been so well mended, the supervisor tells me, as he was here for the tax yesterday, that it will be almost as good as if it were M'Adamised."

"As if it were M'Adamised, brother!" ejaculated Miss Rachellina Fitzhurst in some heat.

"Upon my honour, sister," rejoined the old gentleman with considerable emphasis, "you said that like the report of a pistol. Yes, as good, almost as good as if it were M'Adamised—so the supervisor tells me, I don't know the fact of my own knowledge; I have not, as you know, travelled the road for a month; I don't believe I shall see a foot of it for the whole winter. Sister and daughter (in a subdued voice as though his regret was great), I don't believe but what—that is, I fear we shall have to spend this winter in the country."

"In the country!" exclaimed Miss Rachellina in the tone of one who had heard so ~~awful~~ awful calamity. "Why, brother, twenty miles from the city; the Hartleys gone to town, and the Bentleys going; with no neighbours but the farmers about here and the people of the village; and the road to the city so bad that it will be impossible—it's worse than imprisonment. I would not myself, nor would I have Fanny, travel that road in winter. Twenty miles! and such a road; no, I would not travel it, brother, for your estate. The consequence is, we shall be here all winter without once seeing the city."

Mr Fitzhurst, who claimed some honour himself for the locality of the road, which he was often heard to assert would be an excellent one when it came to be M'Adamised, felt somewhat offended by what his sister had said against it. He, therefore, replied—a twitch of the gout seizing him at the same time—with more than his usual asperity:

"Upon my honour, Miss Fitzhurst—you do not, upon my honour, madam, deserve the safety, and convenience, and pleasure of a direct road. Show me a straighter road? There are five miles of it M'Adamised now—and as soon as the spring will allow, it will be finished to the city. It has been thoroughly repaired—the supervisor told me so yesterday, you saw him here yourself. Why, yes; now I remember, you spoke in praise of the road."

"In praise of the road," replied Miss Rachellina, feeling that at this point it was necessary for her to make some defence; "so I did speak in praise of the road, such as it was in the summer, but summer is not winter, brother."

"Sister, I am certainly aware of the fact," said Mr Fitzhurst with a solemn inclination of the head; "I am certainly aware of that fact, but the supervisor, Mr Lenson, tells me that arrangements are made to have hanks on the road all the winter; that thereby all the mud-holes will be filled up, and that rails will be laid across the soft places."

"Rails! such travelling, I suppose, you call riding on a rail-road. Do you, brother?"

"Yes, sister, it's a rail-road, I suppose, if it's composed of rails, but—"

"Yes, brother, but the jolting, the jolting—it will be enough to shake one to pieces."

"I know, it sister; upon my honour I know it; and how do you think that I, with my gout, my infirmities, am to get into town over it?"

During this discussion Fanny said not a word. She received the announcement of her father's intention of staying in the country with a face that was quite solemn at first, but which soon relaxed into an arch expression as the debate waxed warm. These discussions between her father and aunt never had anything serious in them; they generally ended in a miff of the moment, which was soon forgotten. There is no telling how far, however, this solemn subject might have carried them, for it was one of the gravest controversies they had ever held, when the servant entered—Miss Rachellina's especial servant, a little black girl, named Thisbe by the lady herself—and announced that there was a carriage coming up the lane, and that she believed it was Miss Bentley's. Miss Bentley and Miss Rachellina were especial friends. The latter rose, therefore, to proceed to the door, receive her friend, and herald her in; but as a parting shot, ere she closed the door after her, she said:

"Well, brother, I suppose, as usual, you will have your own way; but I don't see how you can reconcile it to your conscience, to your duty as a parent, to keep your daughter out here all winter without any society, except such plebeian people as we shall have visiting us from the village. I don't see, for my part, how you can reconcile it to your notions of family respect and regard for your daughter."

So speaking, Miss Rachellina, with her highest touch of dignity, threw back her head till the bow of ribbon on the top of her cap bobbed as if it would snap off like a hollyhock in a high wind, and closed the door.

"Ahem! ahem!" commenced Mr Fitzhurst, clearing his throat, on being left alone with his daughter. "Fanny, my dear, how do you like your present?"

"Very much indeed, father; they are set so prettily, and are indeed beautiful, exceedingly beautiful; but, father, indeed I wish you were well of your gout, for you suffer so much with it; and if you were, I would eat on your account at the parties this winter, and wear my present, and say that my dear father gave it to me!"

"Well, daughter, I tell you; you shall have the carriage wherever you choose; and no doubt my gout will be better with your good nursing; and then you shall go to town and stay as long as you wish; and go to all the parties!"

"Heigho! father, it is for you to give leave; not for myself; but last winter was such a delightful one, and I don't see why you should have the gout this winter. No master; I will stay at home and read, and improve myself; for indeed I feel a great many self-reproaches last winter after I had returned from a party and sat over my solitary fire in my room. I used to think so often that I had wasted time, or been giddy, or something always arose to worry me. Recollect now, father, whenever I want a book, no master what Pompey or the servants are doing, they must go to town for it. I don't believe Mr Pinckney's brother's friend will stay very long with us if he has to spend his time in the country."

"My daughter, I hope that——"

Mr Fitzhurst was interrupted in his remark by the entrance of his sister and her friend.

"Niece," said Miss Rachellina, with a much brighter look than that which sat upon her brow when she left the room, "we have one consolation and comfort in remaining in the country, at any rate; Miss Bentley has just come over to tell me that she thought of remaining; and when I told her that brother had made up his mind to stay in consequence of his gout, she at once decided upon it."

"Yes," said Miss Bentley, after saluting Mr Fitzhurst and his daughter, "I have repeatedly thought to myself that I should like to spend this winter in the country, and now I am resolved."

Both Mr Fitzhurst and his daughter expressed themselves delighted at the news. As it was growing dark, lights were now brought in by the servants; and as Mr Fitzhurst could not move, without pain, to the parlour, the evening meal was handed round in the room in which they were assembled.

CHAPTER III.

MR PAUL FITZHURST was the son of a former governor of the state in which the scenes of our narrative occurred. He was descended from a very old and noble family of England; one of the younger branches of which emigrated to the United States when they were colonies of Great Britain. They acquired wealth in their new homes, and transmitted it to their descendants, who were so fortunate as to retain it, notwithstanding the repeat of the law of entail. Mr Paul Fitzhurst was as proud of his pedigree as any Hidalgo of Spain could possibly be, notwithstanding he vowed himself a thoroughgoing republican. His ancestors, however, at the time of the revolution, were not supposed to be remarkably attached to the new order of things. In fact, the cry of "tory" had been raised against one of them about the time that the colonial cause was darkest; but in the progress of events, when the thirteen stars waved to successive victories, and threatened their stripes in the shape of confiscations to the disaffected remnant who might remain after their national establishment, this ancestor of Mr Fitzhurst received new light, and though he might have been reproached, in the phrase of the present day, with being an "eleventh hour" man, it is certain that what he lost in time he made up in zeal as soon as his eyes were opened upon the ever of his way. Since the conversion of this ancestor to the republican cause, all the Fitzhursts had been advocates of it. The election of one of them to the gubernatorial chair, fully proves that the people of their state believed, at least, one of them sincere.

Mr Paul Fitzhurst, while he loved republicanism, was wont to eulogise privately the British system in some respects, but he never could bring either his son or daughter to his way of thinking, though, strange to say, his sister coincided with him.

In fact, Mr Fitzhurst looked upon himself, particularly when he caught the reflection from a mirror of his powdered head and queue, and his face calculated to set them off, as one of the last surviving representatives of the old aristocracy. Though of a quick temper, Mr

Paul Fitzhurst was never known to have but one quarrel, and that was with his elder brother, who, at the period at which our narrative commences, had been dead many years. The circumstances were as follows:—His elder brother, Josiah, was a bachelor, a most singular being, a man of most eccentric habits, who became a fanatical member of the methodist church, a class of Christians against whom, we wish it understood, we would not say one word, for we consider that they have done as much good as any other religious denomination. It was thought that Josiah had gotten a maggot in his head before he joined the methodists, but, be this as it may, a short time after his membership he came to the conviction that his brother's queue was a mere adornment of vanity, a meretricious, unsightly, and unrighteous appendage to the human form, and that it ought by all means to be abated—cut off from setting a bad example.

After this conscientious opinion had for some time possessed Josiah's head, he made a serious call upon his brother, formally introduced the theme which had caused himself so much uneasiness, and concluded by begging and praying him to lop off that excrescence of vanity forthwith.

As may justly be supposed, Paul was highly indignant thereat. He peremptorily refused; and so strongly was the impression that Josiah was insane made upon Paul's mind by the interview, that he had strong notions of taking out a commission of lunacy, for he was fearful if Josiah was left to himself he would not only squander his estate, but that under his strange hallucination he would commit some rash, perhaps awful act.

While Paul was debating this subject with himself, Josiah called one day, and with even more earnestness than before, renewed his supplication that Paul would consent to his proposition. Josiah averred, that he felt satisfied that, if Paul did not comply, some terrible dispensation would overtake both of them. Paul, as firmly as before, refused to part with his queue, but he became thoroughly convinced in his own mind that Josiah was insane, and he resolved that the very next day he would ride into town, and consult counsel as to what steps he should take with regard to his brother's unfortunate mental malady. Finding that he could not prevail with Paul, Josiah appeared to drop the idea. He remained with his brother for several hours conversing upon different topics, until dinner was announced, when the brothers sat down together, and partook of a very hearty meal. They broached some of Paul's best Madeira, and afterwards, when reflecting upon the matter, Paul could not but be of the opinion that Josiah tried to get him to drink more than was his custom. However, it is not known whether Josiah succeeded or not, but after they had cracked a bottle apiece, and smoked several cigars, Paul fell asleep in his chair as they sat together.

It is not known what could have tempted Josiah; whether the deed was premeditated, or whether, on beholding his brother's queue sticking out at full length over his coat collar in pugnacious defiance, the sudden hallucination entered his mind, must ever remain in doubt. But this is a fact, that as soon as Paul gave evidence that he was asleep by a lengthened nasal announcement, Josiah deliberately drew a pair of large shears from his pocket, and with one clip he cut his brother's queue close off.

On the instant of the decapitation, and before Paul, awakened by the deed, was aware of the extent of the injury done him, Josiah made a precipitate retreat, bearing with him the dismembered trophy, like an Indian with the scalp of his enemy. Paul, notwithstanding he had asserted and believed that his brother was *non compos mentis*, and should therefore have forgiven misdeeds for which Josiah could not have been held morally responsible, nevertheless became maddened almost to insanity himself. The brothers never spoke together again. Paul always maintained that Josiah was insane, though from a brotherly regard he never cited the decapitation of his queue as a proof of the fact. Josiah, after a life of eccentric and humorous adventures, gave himself a mortal injury, in attempting, from the top of his house, the experiment of flying with a machine which he had made for that purpose. He humorously said, as his servants were bearing him to the house, that he had come to the conclusion of the Dutchman who had tried similar experiment with similar results—“ ‘That flying was easy enough, but that lightning was the devil.’ But,” said he, when he had been laid on the bed, “hurry to the village for Mr Maulsby, the lawyer; I'll leave all my property to my little nephew Sid, and that I think will prove to my brother that I am not clear cracked, if I did cut his queue off. Ha. ha!—oh my side! No, there's some

method in my madness." And this was the end of a most eccentric scion of the family of Fitzhurst.

Miss Rachellina Fitzhurst was a maiden lady, of whom we might say, as of Campbell's beechen tree :—

“ Thrice twenty summers has she stood
In bloomless, fruitless solitude.”

This “ single blessedness,” however, we have the best authority—her own—for averring, was her own fault. But Miss Rachellina's heart could not be said to resemble the bark of the above-named tree, on which, we are told by the poet, was carved

“ Many a long forgotten name.”

On the contrary, though it was evident from the maidenhood of the lady that the impressions made upon her heart were not very deep, it nevertheless could not be said that they were “forgotten,” as Miss Rachellina was in the habit of recounting to Fanny the names of a list of despairing swains whom she had known in her time. But then it might have been that the impressions were only made upon the hearts of those unfortunate gentlemen, and that Miss Rachellina, as she could not reciprocate their passions, remembered them in pity.

Miss Deborah Amelia Bentley, whose visit to Miss Rachellina we have recorded in our last chapter, was also a maiden lady of about Miss Rachellina's age. In a little back parlour, which Miss Rachellina held to be her especial room, over a fragrant cup of tea, it was much the custom of these ladies to rehearse, for the edification of Fanny, the chivalrous attentions which they had received in their bellehood. If Fanny did not allow something for the imagination of these ladies, the degeneracy of the present age must have been made manifest to her. Fanny knew the history of every beau they ever had, or even thought they had. When alone, however, with her aunt, Miss Rachellina would more than insinuate, after one of these conversations, particularly if Miss Deborah had taken the lead in it, that her friend was a little fond of exaggeration with regard to her beaux. And Miss Bentley, when similarly situated with Fanny, would frequently renew the theme which had been broken by the absence of Miss Rachellina, when she would smile with peculiar incredibility while alluding to the interpretations which her absent friend had given to the alleged attentions of certain gentlemen. Miss Deborah would, moreover, recount, as if she designed a set off to Miss Rachellina's narrative, certain passages between those very gentlemen and herself, which had a marvellous cast towards the tender. But these two fair maiden ladies were devoted friends; and for years past, at least, nothing had disturbed the harmony of their friendship. Miss Deborah had a large fortune, and Colonel Bentley was her orphan nephew. As the colonel was a gentleman at large, and had no means of his own, he depended entirely upon his aunt for resources; and as the good lady did not bleed as freely as he could have wished, the greatest source of annoyance that the colonel had in the world—quite a common annoyance by-the-bye—was the occasional want of the needful.

C H A P T E R IV.

THE estate of Mr Fitzhurst was called “ Holly,” from a singular event, which was the subject of a tradition in the family. The first Fitzhurst who came from England received a large tract—a grant from the crown. He was fond of hunting; and one day, in an excursion of the kind, he ascended a precipitous hill. In the reckless pursuit of game, his foot slipped on the very brow of a precipice, and he would have been dashed to pieces in the valley below, had he not seized on the instant a holly bush, and regained his foothold. One of his descendants subsequently built a house near this hill, and in commemoration of the event called his estate, Holly.

The evening of the day on which we introduced Sidney Fitzhurst to our readers, he made his appearance at Holly a little after dusk; but without his friend Pinckney. When he had disengaged himself of his cloak and riding cap, Fanny took a seat on his knee, and passing her hand playfully through his hair, asked :—

“ Well, brother, what news do you bring from the city? Did you see Jane Moreland? What did she say?”

"Fanny, Howard Pinckney has arrived."

"Has he—come at last—but, I suppose, as he cannot bear the dulness of the country, he will only pay us a flying visit, and then flit away like a summer bird."

"Daughter," said Mr Paul Fitzhurst, who, with his gouty limb on a cushion, was seated in a velvet covered arm-chair, which would have delighted the Sybarite, provided he were goutless, "I hope I have inducements enough even in the country at Holly to interest even Mr Pinckney. His father was an old friend of mine, a gentleman of capacity and distinguished, and he found amusement enough here when we were young men together to spend some time with me."

"Ah, but father, that was in the summer."

"In the summer—yes, it was in the summer. His duties required his presence in Washington City in the winter; and if they had not, I trust he would not have died of gout if he had spent a winter with me; upon my word, daughter, it is a bad habit you are getting into of jeering at the country."

"Oh, father! this is the very first intimation I have uttered, that could lead to the suspicion that I did not think the country a very paradise. I am satisfied that such an intellectual gentleman as the elder Mr Pinckney could easily have killed a winter in the country. That is (and she spoke in a whisper to her brother), if the winter did not kill him. But (aloud) do, brother, tell us what kind of a gentleman is your Mr Howard Pinckney."

"Why, my dear Fanny," replied her brother, playing with her side curl as he spoke, "a very clever fellow—so you must look out for your heart."

"Look out for my heart—heigho, there is no need of looking out for it here—it's of no use to me—I can let it run entirely at large. Who's here to catch it? I'd give it for the asking."

"That's right; but mind and keep it till it is asked for; don't let any one steal the stray, Fanny."

"But, brother, tell me what kind of a looking man is Mr Pinckney; is he tall or short, or ugly or handsome?"

"Fanny, you have heard me speak of him before."

"I know it—but now that he has returned from his travels I suppose his head's turned, and indeed I have forgotten your description of him, if you ever did describe him—I think you said he was good looking."

"Good looking! yes, I should say so—very."

"But tell me,—particularize."

Sidney laughed. "Fanny, you are a regular descendant of Mother Eve—well, then, he is tall, and very slim."

"Like his father," remarked Mr Paul Fitzhurst.

"He has a high forehead, shaded with dark hair that is rather thin—he has a deep, sunken, and very black eye; a nose inclining to the Roman; a dimple on his left cheek and chin."

"Dimples! that's a woman's beauty."

"And whiskers that meet under his chin according to the fashion."

"Whiskers!" exclaimed Mr Paul Fitzhurst,—"that's a most disgusting fashion. The old school of dress,—the old school of dress, Sidney, is the true habit for a gentleman."

"Father," said Fanny, mischievously, "I don't think—indeed I don't, that whiskers are stranger looking appendages than a queue."

"A queue—why, daughter, all the most distinguished men of England of the last age wore queues—most all the signers of the Declaration of Independence were queues."

"Father, if you won't think I am saucy, I'll say that in the progress of human events they should have made a Declaration of Independence against them—that when they cut off their allegiance from the crown they should have cut—"

"Daughter," interrupted her father, a disagreeable reminiscence crossing his mind at the moment, "that is being saucy,"—and after an instant he added, smiling, "you are a rebel, you in all respects, but I forgive you."

"You should my dear Pa," said Fanny, laughing; "for, to tell the truth, I do think powder and a queue set off a fine face admirably."

"I think so," said the old gentleman complaisantly.

"But, father," continued Fanny, "there are some faces that a queue makes very funny—there's Mr Heartley's (here the old gentleman laughed), his nose sticks up before, and his queue sticks out behind, just as if there was a rivalry between them (at this the father laughed heartily); indeed I never see his queue sticking out so but I want to cut it off."

This last remark caused a frown to gather on the parental brow. Sidney turned his face from his father to hide a smile, and said:

"Fanny, Mr Pinckney will come out with me to-morrow; he talks as if he would spend the greater part of the winter with us."

"Does he?—well I hope he'll like the country. Now I must play my lady—throw off my dishabille, and trim myself up."

"Fanny, Fanny," said her father, reprovingly, "I hope you always play the lady."

"To be sure I do, father; but, you know, I sometimes play it in dishabille, and that won't do before a strange gentleman."

"Daughter that won't do before any gentleman—there's excuse for me in my age, my gout and my infirmities, but a lady,—fie, Fanny! there's none whatever."

"These, father, you agree with aunt Rachellina—you said that precisely like her. Now, brother, as you have told us how very good-looking Mr Pinckney is, pray what are his other good qualities?"

He is a man of talents, sister—his fellow collegians thought of genius; he has a large fortune, does nothing, and is of course sometimes afflicted with *ennui*."

"Well, well," said Fanny, and she sighed, and turning to her father, said, "Father, I did not mean that sigh for town, but I could not help thinking that sometimes when it is my lot to entertain Mr Pinckney, while you are lying down, and brother is out, and aunt Rachellina is at Miss Bentley's, particularly when this Mr Pinckney, is affected with *ennui*, that he will sit on one side of the fire-place and I on the other, and we will yawn at each other so sentimentally. No, father I don't frown so; you know it's the captive's privilege to complain, and I am in a very bad humorous to-night. But," she continued, rising from her brother's knee, "I must go and tell aunt, that all due preparations may be made for the reception of this courtly Mr Pinckney from abroad—I do believe that aunt will find out that Mr P.'s father was an old beau of hers."

So saying, Fanny, with the agile and graceful steps of youth and health, and hope and beauty, glided out of the room.

CHAPTER V.

LETTER FROM HOWARD PINCKNEY TO CHARLES MATEMON OF CHARLESTON, S.C.

MY DEAR MATEMON:—Here I am once more on the *terra-firma* of my native land. We were just twenty-four days on our voyage. No accidents or incidents, except the loss of one poor fellow overboard in a gale. My fellow passengers were not much to my liking, and so I spent the most of my time in reading, or in leaning over the vessel's sides, and musing on the waste of waters around me.

"The sea, the sea, the open sea."

What a glorious song that is. You shall hear it as I have heard it, while the stiff breeze bore us rapidly ahead, sung by a sailor whose enthusiastic tones made the nerves tingle, while they seemed to stretch to an illimitable distance over the waters, and make the wild waves merry with their melody and language so appropriate to the scene.

How sometimes a scrap of verse lives in one's memory. We know not how the deuce it got into our minds, but out it pops on some occasion, and then for the first time we know that we have remembered it. Often as I have looked out upon the waves I found myself repeating Byron's lines, as though they were my own spontaneous thoughts:—

"Once more upon the waters—yet once more;
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider."

I have trod the deck beneath a bright and holy moon, and felt as if the sensation of drowsiness would never weigh my eyelids down again. Those three lines which I have quoted

pleased me more than all Byron's address to the ocean, in the conclusion of *Childe Harold*. There is too much effect in the address—too much theatrical effect—it seems studied for the occasion, like a player's dignified exit in the last scene; but what has this to do with my whereabout now. On my arrival at New York I received a letter from our old friend, Sid Fitzhurst, inviting me to go to—and spend some time with him. Well, as I had nothing else to do, no fair cynosure to draw me east or west, or north or south, I determined to accept his invitation. You know well what a fine fellow he is, and I felt satisfied that his society would afford me great pleasure. Besides, as I wrote to you, I have business relative to my pecuniary matters, which requires my presence here for a while.

On my arrival in,—in the steamboat, I met Fitzhurst on the wharf ready to welcome me. Business detained me in town that day, and the next I proceeded with him to his father's.

Holly is the name of the estate, and it is beautifully situated. Arriving from a country so richly cultivated as England, the scene around me, as I proceeded to Holly, arrested my attention from the striking contrast. After passing five or ten miles from the city, the country appeared apparently uncultivated compared with those to which my eye has been lately accustomed. After journeying in an aristocratic old family coach (I like these family vehicles) over hill and dale and through stream and woodland we wound for several miles around the foot of a chain of hills through a wild country, and came all at once in view of a baronial-looking estate, with a village romantically situated beyond it. The village is called Springdale, and appears picturesque and beautiful; but I suppose on visiting it, if I ever do, it will disenchant me, as have many beauties, whose attractions, reversing the general law, were greater in the distance.

"I remember you wrote me that you met Sidney's father and aunt in one of your flying visits through their city, but that you were not fortunate enough to see Sidney's sister, as she was then indisposed. Well, sir, I have seen her for you. The family received me with the greatest kindness. Old Mr Fitzhurst and his sister appeared to vie with each other in welcoming me with old-fashioned courtesy. Sidney's sister—I was impressed with her beauty at the moment of presentation—greeted me as demurely as her aunt, and yet I thought I saw a lurking humour in her eye. In the course of the afternoon we chanced to be left alone, when the lady changed her manner instantly, and said, laughably—

"Do tell me, Mr Pinckney, don't you think when I come to be aged—as old as aunt—that I will make a most dignified old maid? I am now in the course of study to that desirable end; and if I am not a little perfect, as the actors say, it will not be aunt Rachelline's fault."

Before this I had felt dull as an oyster; but the maiden gay so completely altered her address—I had thought her the very pink of primness—that I really laughed outright.

"Come, Mr Pinckney," said she, archly, at the same time putting her finger to her lip to enjoin silence, "if aunt hears you I shall get a lecture; and aunt will insist upon it that, notwithstanding you are a gentleman of travelled experience and practised courtesy, you could not resist my hoydenish ways, and your mirth exploded in spite of you."

Matemon, this fair Fanny is certainly well calculated to make the hours pass uncounted. You are a marrying man; therefore do, I advise you, at your earliest leisure, to make a visit to Holly. I do, upon my honour, believe that this fair one would soon become your ladye love.

I will describe her to you; paint her with my pen. She is, perhaps, above the middle height. I am, you know, a connoisseur in beauty, and I hold her height the very one for woman, at least, if her lover be tall. Her form slightly approaches *embonpoint*, and she has a wavy walk—do you understand?—like Celeste's, for instance. I fancy that when *Pigmalian*'s prayer was granted, the creature of his creation, endowed by the merciful gods with Promethean heat, approached him with her tread. How prettily her feet, as that saucy fellow *Suckling* has it,

"Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light."

Nothing in the wide world, Matemon, arrests my attention quicker than *Cinderella's* slipper when it is performing duty. She has a fairy little hand full of rings, and when I see it playing with her curls I understand the poetry of motion. Her bust is like the young swan's when it

first swells to the wave, and her neck is worthy of it, and delicately fair. As the southern sun has browned my cheek, I confess my devotion to its contrast, and therefore worship I a fair complexion. The mouth of this gay girl you would call, perhaps, a thought too large, were not her lips so finely moulded—the upper the very type of the little god's bow, and the under one pouting, and apparently formed of a rose-leaf—and did they not develope teeth of dazzling white. Her nose is straight, and the chiseled curve of the nostril would have bewitched Canova. Her forehead is high and fair—I might say pale; and being shaded by dark brown hair, it gives an intellectual cast to features which otherwise would be marked only for their beauty and archness. Her eye—here's Byron again—

" Which, wild as the gazelle's,
Now brightly bold, or beautifully shy,
Wins as it wonders, dazzles where it dwells—"

is of dark hazel, and the best feature in her face. It is formed for every expression—the gayest or the gravest. Her voice is music itself, and she repeats poetry as a nightingale sings. She would have made a great actress, a very great actress. In short, such a form, when I have been drunk with the witchery of the arts, has come to me beneath Italian skies, when my spirit was lapped in the fairy land, and my dreams were of heaven.

There, sir, is not this a phoenix of a fair one? I think I hear you say, as Sheridan said of Whitbread's treatise on this celebrated bird,—

" A poultreter's description of a phoenix," Maybe it is such; I described her to you just as she appears to me, and just as I would describe a picture which had touched my imagination, but which could make no impression on my heart. I do certainly admire Miss Fitzhurst; but, Matemon, I have seen enough of the sex. " Man delights not me, nor woman either." I make one or two exceptions to the first assertion, but the other is the rule without an exception, a rare thing in logic, but you know there is no logic for the heart.

Furthermore, of the above described lady, (you must court her, Matemon,) I believe, though you would not think so at first, that she possesses not only wit and playfulness, but deep sensibility. I think, too, she has a superior genius; she has read much, particularly James's plays and novels; and if I might say so, I suspect she has a little wilfulness and waywardness mixed up with her good qualities. But, Matemon, she will suit you exactly; come and court her; make me your groomsman, and I'll go south with your bridal party, and enjoy happiness by reflection; I never shall catch it any other way; shadows, shadows.

" Who lost Mark Antony the world?" &c.

You know the rest, and I know the sex are now as they always were, and always will be. No, I have seen enough of them abroad; and of one in particular, but no matter; I have written you upon that theme, and would to God that I could make by-gones by-gones in all respects.

I have made up my mind to spend this winter with Fitzhurst. I think I can quite sedately enjoy myself here in the country, and should I want excitement, the city is not many miles off, and I can soon throw myself in its whirlpool.

It is wearing towards night. I have been sitting alone in my chamber, which commands a glorious prospect of hill and dale, and river winding through, writing to you. Such is not solitude. For the last five minutes I have been nibbling my pen unconsciously, while looking out on the setting sun as he hides his broad disk behind a clump of oaks that caps the very summit of a hill not far off. He flings his parting radiance there like the halo round the brow of the martyr, while the vale below is as rayless as the valley of the shadow of death. This coming of still twilight on, particularly of an autumn evening, has always had a melancholy fascination for me. The many-tinted, rustling leaves that fall in the silence around you, seem like the hopes which a few months ago were green, but which are now strewed upon the ground—midst the dirt and ashes of the past—never to rise more.

I tell you what, Matemon, a man should have some steady aim in view through all his wanderings—to travel in pursuit of pleasure is to chase a butterfly, that only lives in a summer's day, or a phantom that lures you to the shades of unrest and inquietude. I have a kind of moody, morbid discontent hanging about me which I cannot dispel. I seek for enjoyment, and find it not. The fruit, whose taste gives pleasure to others turns to ashes on my

lips. This is expressing myself, perhaps, too strongly; but what I mean to say is, that I have a perpetual and wayward restlessness upon me, from which I in vain endeavour to escape. The cause of it, I do believe, is the want of a settled object in life. Until I was eighteen, you are aware, I expected that it would be my lot to make my own fortune. While preparing myself in college with the double motive of necessity and ambition, as incentives to action, my energies were elastic, and my spirit fearless, and panting not only for collegiate honours, but the broader and showier ones of the world. True, sometimes I wished for wealth, for I knew if I possessed it the harassing cares of pecuniary want would not intrude upon me; and all others, while health remained, I believed would be merely a pleasureable excitement in the career of ambition.

One gloomy evening in college, while I was indulging in such a reverie, and longing for the philosopher's stone, the postman brought me a letter sealed with black. I started—from whom could it be?—I paused ere I opened it. My father and mother were in their graves; I was an orphan with extensive connections, but without any near relative except a cousin. I left him in high health, on the eve of being married to a lovely woman, and in the possession of one of the largest fortunes in all the south. He was several years my elder, and it was by his assistance that I was then at college. A strange, unnatural, and shuddering excitement ran through me as I thought of my cousin, of his immense possessions, of my dependance, of that black seal. I tore it open. My cousin was no more. He had been shot in a duel by a former rival in his love affair, whom he had supplanted. The rival had been secretly practising for months previously to challenging him. He had succeeded in his murderous intent. My cousin was shot through the heart. Before going on the ground he had made his will, and left me his sole heir. I sprang to my feet with a bound at the thought of the immense wealth of which I was master. The next moment I threw myself on my couch with humiliation and shame. I cursed myself from the heart at the idea that I should have such an impulse on the acquirement of wealth by the death—and such a death—of one so near and dear to me, one who had been my benefactor, and had left me his all. Matemon, the deepest sense of self-degradation I have ever known was then. You were at college with me when this occurred. I do not know why I should call it up now except to say, that the wealth I thus acquired, while it left me open to pursue any path of ambition I might desire—what I had been so ardently wishing for—gave me also the means of sensual gratification—presented the Circean cup, and all the deity within me became of the earth, earthly. But though I did taste of this cup, my "misery" was not so "perfect" as Milton, in his splendid *Masque of Comus*, describes that of Circe's votaries to have been, who—

"Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forgot,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty."

No! I panted to see my native home again. You must present my remembrances warmly to all our mutual friends. In a few months I shall be with you all. Write me, write me; give me all the news. I have an idea of following Washington Irving's example: taking a tour upon the prairies, or something like it. There would be excitement in such adventures; and what a contrast with the scenes I have left behind me! This contrast would be the zest of the enjoyment. Is it not wonderful that he who had been housed so carefully and luxuriously should have been exposed to the open lodgings of the wilderness, the skyey canopy, not only without detriment to his health, but to its improvement? He tells us that, after returning from his tour, he experienced a sensation of suffocation on awaking in the night and finding himself in a room. How many of our aches and troubles we bring upon ourselves. What a free pulse I should have now were I treading on the prairies!

Sidney Fitzhurst and myself have been reading Irving to-day together. Sid has just entered my room, he says:—

"Come, Pinckney, if you wish to imitate Irving, suppose you accompany me to a neighbouring farmer's, where there is to be a husking match."

"What is that?" I asked.

"After the corn," said he, "has been gathered from the field, it is arranged in a pile near the corn-crib, and the labouring people, white and black, meet there on some night and strip

it of the husks. They form themselves into parties, divide the corn heaps equally, and the contest is, which shall finish the pile the soonest. Come, it will amuse you; I do not know but that I may be a candidate some of these days for popular favours, and shaking hands with the sovereigns; these may be of service to me: and frankly, apart from such considerations, I like these gatherings."

I agreed; and so here I go, Matemon, to a hunting match. Sidney sends a thousand good wishes to you. Adieu!

HOWARD PINCKNEY.

CHAPTER VI.

The country road to which we have alluded passed between Holly and the village of Springdale. A gravelled and winding lane led from it to the residence of Mr. Fitzhurst. At the entrance of the lane stood a cottage, or log-house of the better sort, to whose precincts we would call the attention of our readers. The cottage was inhabited by an old woman, named Gammon, who was known in the neighbourhood for miles around as Granny Gammon, together with her grandson, Robert Gammon, a lame boy, and a grand daughter, a cousin of the boy, named Peggy Blossom. These two last were all that remained out of a large progeny of the once of Granny Gammon. She had been married twice, and had had a very large family, but they seemed destined, both by fate and nature, for a short life, as accident or disease had carried them all off. Peggy Blossom was the daughter of one of Granny Gammon's sons by her first marriage. A short time after the birth of Peggy her parents both died, and she was left to the charge of her grandmother.

Robert was the descendant of the granny by her second marriage. His mother died in giving him birth, and some years afterwards his father was blown up in the explosion of a powdermill in which he was a labourer. Robert Gammon, or Bobby Gammon, as he was generally called, was extensively known in the neighbourhood.

In his childhood he had been remarkable for his beauty. Now beauty of face was all that was left to him. Bobby was very fond of horses, and as he was a most expert horseman, Mr. Paul Fitzhurst had employed him to ride several races for him, in all of which, except the last, (Bobby was successful). It was thought by the jockies that his skill and management, as much as the speed of the horse, led to results favourable to Mr. Fitzhurst. In the last race Bobby rode, as he was approaching the goal the foremost rider, the girth of the saddle broke, and he was precipitated to the ground with great violence. By the accident his collar bone was broken and his left leg. Bobby was taken to his grandmother's, the physician of the village was sent for, and the broken bones set, but after such a fashion as to leave Bobby a cripple for life, with his right shoulder much higher than his left one, and his left leg much shorter than its brother. Bobby lay a long time at the point of death. He slowly recovered, but the accident gave such a shock to his frame that, though he grew older, he did not appear to increase much either in size or height. The accident happened when he was in his fourteenth year—he was now approaching his seventeenth. His cousin Peggy, who was a year his elder, had watched over his long confinement with the faithfulness of a sister, by which she had acquired more control over Bobby than other human being, not excepting his grandmother.

Mr. Fitzhurst, as some recompence to Bobby for the injury he had received in his service, gave him a deed for fifty acres of land, and had built on it the log house in which Granny Gammon lived. Besides which, he frequently sent flour or marketing to the grandmother and her grand-children; in fact, it might be said that he entirely supported them. Their condition was much better now than it had been before Bobby's mishap.

Peggy was a great favourite at Holly; particularly with Miss Rachellina and Fanny. She was a good milliner, and was often sent for by the former lady to make caps, &c for her, when Peggy would remain at Holly for a week or two; for Miss Rachellina was very careful in her toilet, and had her habiliments made under her own eye. Besides pecuniary recompence, she frequently made presents of articles of dress, capes, bonnets, edging, to her protegés. Peggy's costliest gifts, however, of this kind, were received from Fanny, for Miss Rachellina had no

idea of putting notions into the girl's head above her station, by giving her the means of extravagant display. Fanny often thwarted her aunt's views in this respect; and Peggy was wont to make her appearance at the meeting house in Springdale in an attire which created more envy amidst her female acquaintances than even her superior beauty—for Peggy was beautiful, and not unconscious of it. Her form was fine, her step springing, her cheek rosy, her eye bright, and she had caught, with a quick spirit of imitation, a certain air in her sojournings at Holly, from her observance and admiration of Fanny Fitzhurst, that distinguished her as much as beauty. The girls of the village who envied her were in the habit of speaking of her, tauntingly, as "Lady Peggy."

Peggy was an arch coquette. There was Bill Hitt, the blacksmith, he had been suing and suffering for years. Bill Hardy, the miller, was in the same predicament. Though he had his Sunday suit on, scrupulously freed from the least speck of flour, Peggy could make his face wear its every-day hue, and turn him as pale as one of his own meal-bags. It was even said that the village doctor, who had a pretty practice, was not insensible to her charms. It is a fact that he often stopped at Granny Gammon's unsent for, to inquire about the old woman's rheumatism, and he prescribed for her without charge. Lawyer Lupton, too, was known to visit Mrs Gammon, to make inquiries as to what she had heard in bygone days concerning certain landmarks, whose locality was involved in a suit in which he asserted he was engaged. It must have been a case of considerable perplexity, for Mr Lupton had frequently to repeat his visits, in order thoroughly to understand what would be the evidence of Mrs Gammon should he require her testimony. And often when the old woman has been doing her best at an explanation, she was not a little offended at Mr Lupton for suffering himself to be drawn off entirely from the subject by the idle conversation of Peggy.

Notwithstanding all these demonstrations against the heart of Peggy, as the village gossips held them to be, it could not be said that she herself had any very decided preference. Latterly, Peggy had very little to say to the lawyer when he visited her grandmother, and when some one asked her the reason, she replied :

"She didn't believe in people who could laugh and talk with her at home, but who couldn't be the same when they met her at other places."

There was one John, or Jack Gordon, as he was called,—a handsome, reckless fellow—who formerly lived in the village, but who had left it within the last six months, though he frequently visited it, for whom it was thought Peggy entertained a liking. Gordon had a dashing, daring way with him. He was a hanger on about races; sometimes had a faro-table at such places, and he spent much more money than he apparently earned. His character did not stand well with the villagers; he bore himself with a swagger among them, but he spent his money freely, would treat anybody and everybody, and was not without tact—and a power to hide his natural propensities where he had an object in view. Latterly when Jack Gordon visited Springdale, he made a much more ostentatious appearance than formerly. He dressed with the flare and flash of a circus-rider; wore a gold watch, with an immense chain; rode a horse that he alleged had cost three hundred dollars, and for which he wouldn't take five hundred, and put up at the best tavern in the place.

We opened this chapter by conducting our reader to the plain but comfortable domicile of Granny Gammon. It was the evening of the husking match. The little family had just finished their supper. Peggy, with a cloth caught on the end of a fork so as to save her hands, which were delicate and fair, was washing the cups and saucers. Her grandmother was sitting in a high-backed, rush-bottomed, old-fashioned chair, engaged in knitting a coarse woollen stocking. Near her lay a large house-dog asleep, and between the dog and Peggy sat Bobby. He eyed the dog for a moment as the animal lay upon his side, with his large ear thrown back, and unperceived by his grandmother or cousin, he stepped to a broom which stood in the corner, and extracted from it the largest and longest straw he could find. Bobby then resumed his seat very demurely, and amused himself with inserting the straw into the dog's ear. The boy seemed to derive no little amusement in beholding the dog's efforts to rid himself of what he doubtless considered a fly. The animal shook his head, and twisted his ear, all to no avail. At last he uttered a fierce growl.

"Be still, Towser!" exclaimed the old woman in a querulous tone. "What's the dog after; here's nobody here."

At this remark, Bobby renewed his efforts to make Towser growl louder, and in the act his grandmother turned and observed him.

"Bobby, Bobby Gammon! it's you, is it, teasing the dog? You'll ruin him; don't you know that's the very way to ruin a dog? Be done, you—indeed, indeed, you'll worry me to death. Yes, you'll be the death of me yet—and I've nursed you from a baby; you don't mind me no more 'an I was a log.'"

"Granny," said Bob, in a half expostulating, half quizzing, tone, "I want to wake Towser up—he must go with me to Mr Elwood's."

"To Mr Elwood's—can't you call the dog if you want him, and not spoil him in that way, and worry me as you do. And for what do you want to go to Mr Elwood's?"

"To the husking, granny."

"To the husking! what can such a cripple and limiter as you are—and so weakly, do at a husking?"

"Granny, you needn't be always telling me I'm a cripple, a limiter as you call it—I do hate that word. I can't help it—and don't I know it?"

"Yes, know it—and don't I know it! And didn't I warn you agin riding races long since, didn't I; answer me that? It's a judgment on you—this racing is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. You'll be punished for it worse yet, if you don't mend your ways."

"Granny, granny!" remonstrated Peggy.

"Peggy, my child, hold your peace. Didn't I see Bobby riding by here this very day on that fiery varmint of a horse that belongs to Mr Elwood; the worst cretur in all the country? Yes, didn't I; he didn't think I'd be a standing at the door—no, he thought his poor old granny was sick in the chimney corner, and he come tearing by like mad. It was such a sunshiny day that I crawled to the door while you were up at the big house; and I declare I hasn't got over it since. Yes, he turned his head away, and tore by like mad; and I wouldn't ha' known him if he hadn't a had Towser jumping after him. He wants to have another fall, and wear us all down attending on him. He'll come to no good, never; and he'll ruin the dog."

"Granny," said Bob, "I was a riding bare back. I'd like to know if I was ever thrown from a horse a riding that way. It was a riding a race I was thrown. Roanoke's saddle turned with me—broke the girth. There's many a chap's been throwed before me, without being hurt at all. And," continued Bob, with bitterness, "I think the hurt is enough, without telling a body of it. You need not think, granny, that I can forget it—there's cousin Peggy's big looking-glass there, that Jack Gordon give her, it tells me of it all the time."

"Robert Gammon," exclaimed Peggy quickly, "I told you before to-day that Jack Gordon didn't give me that looking-glass. He was driving by here one day in a cart, and he said he had won some things at a raffle, and he asked me if I wouldn't take care of the glass for him till he could call for it, as he was afraid of breaking it."

"You've had it here long enough to make it a gift, anyhow, cousin Peggy," said Bob, though in a subdued tone. "And I wonder if there's any harm in riding, if everybody don't know that Jack Gordon is a torn down rider—he rides at all ho—"

"Bobby," interrupted Peggy, "granny don't care about your riding if she didn't fear that you would get hurt again."

"Hurt again," exclaimed the old grandmother; "yes, and only think how he wears out his clothes riding horseback!"

"Well, granny; I reckon Mr Fitzhurst give me the clothes."

"And don't I know it; and is that the reason you should wear them out? Mr Fitzhurst won't live for ever, and who will you get clothes from then? I had a dream last night, and it bodies no good to nobody."

"Granny," said Bob, rising from his seat, and stepping from before the glass, so that the reflection of his person might not appear in it, "I don't care what you say to me, so as you let me alone about being a limiter. My God! I can't help it."

"Robert, don't you know better than to take the Lord's name in vain! That's a sin, now, that's a sin. Mercy on me, this rheumatiz."

"Come, Towser," said Bob, to the dog. The animal arose, shook himself, and stood prepared to follow. "Come along, old boy—we shan't see the fun." Saying which, and followed by the dog, Bob left the house.

"Be back, Bobby, early," screamed the old woman after him; but Bobby, unhearing or unheeding, walked on with Towser by his side. He had not proceeded ten steps when the door opened, and Peggy called to him. He turned with alacrity to meet her. She closed the door after her and advanced to the fence that lay between them.

"Bobby," asked she, "have you seen Jack Gordon lately?"

"No, I have not, cousin Peggy; why?"

"How the moon shines. Look at your hat—put it back further on your head, that way (and Peggy fixed it); why don't you brush your hair, Bobby, and keep yourself more tidy? The ladies at the big house think you have such a good-looking face—I'm sure I mend your clothes and make your shirts—let me turn over that collar better, and do all I can to keep you neat—you ha'n't seen Jack Gordon lately."

"No, cousin Peggy?"

"Well, Bobby, if you see him tell him that I say he must come and take his glass away?"

"You ha'n't seen him neither lately, have you, cousin Peggy?" asked Bob, archly.

"No, no," replied Peggy quickly; "and I don't want to see him. Tell him, if you see him, to come and take his glass away."

"I don't believe I shall see him; he's got above 'husking matches or below them, I don't know which."

"Bobby, are you going through Holly?"

"Yes, I am—don't you hear them chaps hallooing now, cousin Peggy? they're going; its the neatest, an' I want to see old Pompey."

"Then, Bobby, if you do, just step and ask Miss Rachellina if she will want me to-morrow. You can bring me word as you come home. They're got a noble, polite gentleman up there; and I do believe he's come to court Miss Fanny."

"Have they?" said Bob; "well, I'll tell Miss Rachellina what you say, and Jack Gordon too, if I see him. Good night, cousin Peggy."

"Good night, Bobby, be back soon," rejoined Peggy, as she turned and entered the house; while Bob, with Towser playing round him, went whistling on his way.

CHAPTER VII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the difference between the colour and years of Robert Gammon and Pompey, the formal old negro coachman of Mr Fitzhurst, to whom we called the attention of our readers in our first chapter, they held quite a partiality for each other. When Bobby was thrown from the horse on the race course, Pompey was the first to hasten to his assistance; and the faithful old negro frequently called at granny Gammon's during her grandson's confinement, to inquire after, and have a talk with him. 'Twas by Pompey's hand, too, that Miss Rachellina sent him many little delicacies; when the coachman never failed to take a seat, and hold long discourses about horses and races, for the boy's fall, poor fellow, had not changed his partialities for the race course and the stable.

Bobby, too, a short time after he was able to go out, had done Pompey an essential service. A neighbour of Mr Fitzhurst, named Thompson, had had with that gentleman a lawsuit concerning a certain tract of land, in which he was defeated. Thompson was a malicious man, and the result rankled in his bosom, and aroused feelings of intense hatred within him towards the victor. One day as Pompey was returning from market his waggon broke down; and with a hatchet and rope that he happened to have with him, he entered a wood belonging to Thompson, which skirted the road, to cut a sapling with which to mend his vehicle, and proceed homeward. While Pompey was in the act of cutting it Thompson came through the wood with two of his slaves; and, knowing the intruder to be the slave of Mr Fitzhurst, he determined to inflict revenge on him. He charged Pompey with the intention of stealing his wood; said he believed he was sent to do it by his master; and, in spite of his prayers and entreaties, ordered his slaves to seize and tie him to a tree, while he himself proceeded to cut a stick of no inconsiderable size, with which to inflict the chastigation. At this very moment Bobby, who had borrowed a gun from Jack Gordon for the purpose of a little sport, came up to the group

just as Thompson was trimming his weapon, and swearing that he would flog Pompey within an inch of his life.

"What's the matter?" said Bobby, in astonishment.—"What's the matter, Pompey?"

"O, my mercy, Mister Bobby," exclaimed the affrighted black, "indeed I meant no harm, O! do beg Master Thompson for me."

"Beg for you!" exclaimed Thompson furiously, "you're past begging for, you black rascal—I'll learn you to steal. Tie him up, you knaves—strip him, strip him, I'll make you beg."

"What's he done, Mr Thompson?" inquired Bobby.

"Done! what's it your business?" exclaimed Thompson—"I've caught him stealing my wood, and, by G—d, I believe he's at it by his master's orders."

"What," says Bobby, "do you mean to say that Mr Fitzhurst sent him to steal your wood?"

"Yes, I do," replied Thompson, flourishing his stick and advancing towards Pompey.

"Mr Thompson; I don't believe you think that yourself," exclaimed Bobby, indignantly. "Begone, you limping little rascal—quit my presence immediately,—or I'll serve you the same as I mean to serve him."

"Limping rascal! Try it if you dare!" said Bobby, lifting his gun from his shoulder.

Thompson looked at Bobby for a moment firmly, and said, "Don't you mean to quit my ground? are you stealing too?"

"Look here," said Bobby, who was a boy of high spirits when aroused, and who was stung deeply by Thompson's taunts on his lameness and his last remark, "I'm no negro, mind that; if you hit that old fellow, if I don't shoot you it will be because my arm is as lame as my leg."

Thompson was an arrant coward; and he knew the character of the boy. He, however, exclaimed, with an effort at fierceness, "Do you mean to say you'll commit murder?—I'll have you hung, Robert Gammon—mind that, my boy."

"Try it," said Bobby; "I'll abide by the law; and if Pompey's been stealing, let him abide by the law too."

"Seize him," said Thompson to his slaves; "seize the boy." But the negroes, notwithstanding their dread of their master, dared not obey his mandate.

"I'll make you sweat for this," exclaimed Thompson firmly to Bobby; but seeing the fixed resolution of the boy's manner, he ordered his slaves to follow him, and hastened through the wood, swearing as he went that he would put Bobby in the Penitentiary for life. Bobby speedily released Pompey. The black hurried off, leaving his rope and hatchet in his flight.

"Stop, Pompey," said Bobby to the negro, as he was hastening from the fatal wood, "take your things now. Thompson can't scare me if I am a weakly boy. He insulted cousin Peggy one day, an' if I'd a been by them with this gun he'd a caught a load to a certainty; you see, Pompey, being that I'm cripple, I won't put up with these things from nobody."

Pompey hurried out of the wood without attending to what Bobby said. The boy, however, picked up the hatchet and rope; and following after him observed, "I always thought Thompson was a coward, and now I know it."

Pompey begged Bobby in mercy not to leave him; and with the boy's assistance he soon repaired the wagon, and, attended by him, reached home in safety. Pompey told the master to his master, who was most indignant at the treatment which his favourite servant had received at the hands of Thompson, and loud in the praise of Bobby.

Thompson, in the meantime, repaired to Squire Morris, to obtain a warrant against Bobby for threatening his life; but the squire, on hearing the whole affair, advised him to drop it, which he reluctantly did. The story nevertheless became the talk of the neighbourhood; and Bobby was as highly praised as Thompson, who was generally unpopular, was censured.

Merrily, in the bright moonlight of a mellow autumn evening, Bobby proceeded to Holly. As he walked round the house to enter the kitchen he met Pompey, and asked him if he would not go to Mr Elwood's to the husking match.

"Mister Bobby, that's the very place I purpose visiting. Don't you see I've got my violin?" said Pompey, with an air of self-respect, holding out at the same time the instrument, which he carried in his hand, and which was carefully covered in a green baize bag. I thought at first I should not be able to enjoy myself fully, 'cause Miss Fanny, I thought, would want me to drive her over to Mr Elwood's this afternoon; but Master Sidney will drive her over,

with company that we have, in the open carriage; so I can go—it's a good distance from here; let's proceed."

Pompey was an aristocratic old family servant, who by personal attendance on his master had heard the best conversation among "the quality," as he called his master's acquaintance; and he had no slight ambition in the way of correct phraseology. He held himself as far above the field negroes as his master held himself above the daily labourers. Pompey was generally known by the title, and answered to the name of Pompey Fitzhurst.

"You observe, Mister Bobby, I don't care much 'bout plrying the violin at these places, because I play's for the quality at all their parties, and it is a descention, but I suppose Nat Ramsey, being that his leg is as big as his body with whiskey, won't be there; and if he is, you know he can't give the company any satisfaction, for he's only a squeaker. You disciver, Mister Bobby, a coloured gentleman, no more an' any other gentleman, should never demean himself. If old master had kept me to driving the coach, what I was brought up to, and not put me to that market waggon, that ere affair in Thompson's wood would never have begun to happen."

"That's true," rejoined Bobby, as he limped along beside the old negro. "But, Pompey, I like some of old Nat's tunes."

"Not meaning to disparage your liking, Mister Bobby," replied Pompey, with the air of a connoisseur, "but you disciver and observe that you have an uncultivated taste, else you would like some of the quality tunes better. When I am in Room I does as Room does, Mister Bobby, and I am not galasaying that I like some of our husking tunes after all. I am going to give 'em to the boys to-night, with a little quality touch to set 'em off. It's to be a pretty big husking they tell me; and when I gets tired about the big house here, I like the relaxation of going about among the Africans."

Proceeding along the lane, that led by the mansion through the estate, to the foot of the hills, and there terminated in a country road that led up a valley, our worthies continued their conversation. Every now and then a wild halloo, uttered by an individual, perchance by a party, bound to the same point, would reach the ears of our characters, at which they would hasten their speed with increased hilarity. The moon had by this time arisen and o'ertopped the hills. The moonbeams, struggling through the trees that skirted the road, shed their checkered light upon their path, and added to their cheerfulness. To an observer of character it would have been amusing to have seen Bobby limping by the side of Pompey, with Towzer following close at his heels; while the old negro walked very erect with his snub more elevated, and holding his violin under his arm in a professional manner, like a dancing master, as he trips it to a fashionable party. Bobby held his head down, with an old hat cocked carelessly on the side of it, which every now and then he would take off for a moment and bear in his hand, while he glanced up at Pompey.

"There's fun in husking, Pompey," observed the boy, as a loud halloo broke over the silence; "them fellows are ahead of us."

"Yes, Mister Bobby, I like it considerably; it is a harmless gathering, as old master says, and he likes to see it going on."

"I wonder if Jack Gordon will be there."

"I don't know, Mister Bobby; you observe and discover that Mr Jack Gordon ain't liked among the folks much; they say hard things agin him."

"I know they do."

"Yes, he has a power of money for one who haint got any property; and it's all got by gambling, if it ain't got in a worse way. We'll soon be there now."

In a bend of the valley to the left, and joining the estate of Mr Fitzhurst, lay the farm of Mr Elwood. He was a plain, rough farmer, and owned some hundred or more acres, which he prided himself in keeping in a high state of cultivation. He was a widower, and childless. An orphan niece was living with him, the mistress of his household: her name was Sarah Grattan and she was remarkable for her mental as well as personal attractions. Though she had received none of the advantages of a city education, her manners, from the native delicacy of her mind, were prepossessing; she was strangely timid and shy, and easily influenced by those around her. She scarcely ever went to the city; seldom to Springdale, and she shrinkingly received the attentions of those who visited her. Fanny Fitzhurst occa-

sionally went to see her, and would have gone much oftener had her visits been sooner returned. But while Miss Grattan was delighted to see her, and entertained her each time with less embarrassment, she hesitated to return the call until requested to do so by her uncle. And when she did visit Holly, the splendour of that establishment, compared with her uncle's dwelling, together with the superior beauty, intelligence, ease, and fashion of Fanny, without exciting her envy, awoke all her diffidence, and kept her in a state of nervous inquietude for fear her demeanour should not be proper, and might excite ridicule. For hours after she had returned home she would sit and think over everything she had said and done, and torture herself with the idea that she had committed some impropriety. Her situation was lonely, and she seemed deeply to feel it. It was thought, too, that her uncle was not as kind to her as he might have been; and those who esteemed themselves gifted with penetration, thought they could at times observe that she brooded over some secret sorrow. There existed no particular reason for believing it, however. Her uncle—a rough, blunt man, somewhat addicted to his cups, and when excited fierce in his speech, and severe to his slaves—appeared kind to her, and anxious to press her into society. He gave her not only every comfort, but every elegance of dress; yet he seemed to expect that she was to have no will of her own. Mr Elwood was unpopular in his neighbourhood; though fond of company, it was not always of a character to interest his niece. When Fanny had been at Mr Elwood's he would often jest his niece, doubtless with a view of showing her off, about certain persons whom he asserted were her beaux; which would make the maiden glance at Fanny, and blush as much with a sense of shame at the characters and standing of her imputed admirers, as from any other feeling. Her uncle did not understand such to be her feelings, or if he did he paid very little regard to them. Some held the opinion that Colonel Bentley was not indifferent to Miss Grattan's charms. On this afternoon the colonel had visited Holly; and when Sidney made the proposition that his sister, with Mr Pinckney and himself, should visit Mr Elwood's, he agreed with alacrity. Perhaps the pleasure, though, of Miss Fanny's company of itself influenced the colonel. There was a person named Joseph Bronson, a store-keeper in Springdale, and reputed wealthy, who boasted himself a most honest and pious citizen, who, it was notorious in the neighbourhood, aspired to Miss Grattan's favour. He was a large, raw-boned, freckled-face man, and he wore an immense sandy wig, that did not, certainly, subtract from his homeliness, though he was not himself, as might be supposed, aware of the fact. It was gossipped around that Mr Elwood favoured Mr Bronson's suit. Bronson's modest assurance was proverbial. He had repeatedly transacted business for Miss Deborah Amelia Bentley, and the colonel's friends used jocosely to tell him, that this worthy only wanted encouragement from his aunt to forsake Miss Grattan for the much larger and surer fortune.

C H A P T E R V I I I .

BRONSON, no unusual occurrence, happened to be at Mr Elwood's on the evening when our party from Holly called. While they were at tea the voices of the huskers, gathering from all quarters, singing and giving a loud halloo as they came, sounded widely through the valley. In a short time nearly a hundred negroes, with a few whites, had met by the corn-crib, which stood some distance from the house, where the corn had been thrown from the carts in a continuous line. This was equally divided, and several rails were laid between the two rows of corn, to mark the division and prevent foul play. After these preliminaries, and after taking all round several drams of whisky from a tin cup, into which the liquid was poured from a large earthen jug of which one of Mr Elwood's trusty servants had the charge, the huskers divided themselves into two parties, and set to work joyously, the contest being which party should finish their pile first. While they worked, some negro or 'other, reputed a good singer, sung a sort of song, with a chorus, in which all joined. Their united voices swelled wide and far through the valley. A poetic mind, hearing them at a distance, might almost have supposed the Indians still held possession of the land, and were preparing, by a war-dance in the deep woods, for some fearful excursion, or were shouting their exultations round some victim at the stake. This harmless amusement of the humble negro has no such terrors: and here these joyous, good-natured beings, making a pleasure of a labour, after performing their allotted

day's work, were gathered, and accomplishing, in a frolic, what, to the untried hands of the farm, would have been the task of days. On this occasion Pinckney was not a little chagrined by the fact that Nat Ramsay, the negro whom he had pronounced a mere scraper to Bobby, was requested to sing. Not having the affected diffidence of the connoisseurs of the art in the refined circles of humanity, Nat instantly complied. He sang a song of which the following verses are a literal specimen. The four first lines of each verse he rolled out with a stentorian voice in solo, while all combined the power of their lungs to give effect to the chorus. Our readers have all heard the celebrated Rice, the Jim Crow of two hemispheres, sing similar songs. Could Nat have heard him, he would not have been as vain of his powers as he was to-night. He certainly, if at all an envious individual, would have hung his harp on the willow. The following is the specimen:—

“ Work on, boys, if we work till mean,
The nigger boys will husk de-corn;
You mind your pile, an’ I mind mine,
The coon ha’ listen, de mason she shins.
O! clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Old Virginney never tire.”

“ When mawn come de work to see,
The possum laugh in de old gum tree,
When winter come me set de trap,
Den nigger laugh at dat ar’ chap.
O! clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Old Virginney never tire.”

When the moon had entirely cleared the ~~the~~ ~~the~~, the party at the house walked forth to observe for awhile the care-defying huskers. Pinckney, who appeared to be struck with the womanly shrinking and sensitiveness of Miss Grattan, offered her his arm, and exerted all his powers of address to interest her. Fanny took the arm of Colonel Bentley. Mr Bronson, somewhat in the dumps at the attention shown by Pinckney to Miss Grattan, made at first an attempt to keep by her side, but in a few moments he fell back and joined Mr Elwood and Sidney Fitzhurst, who brought up the rear.

“ Do you feel very romantic to-night, Miss Fitzhurst? ” asked Mr Pinckney, turning towards Fanny, who was a few steps behind Miss Grattan and himself.

“ You proclaim yourself such a sceptic about love and romance, and all such things, sir,” rejoined Fanny, that you act upon me as the disenchanter of such dreams. I declare your conversation for this last week has been that of a staid old bachelor of fifty or seventy, rather than that of a travelled gentleman who, I hope, still holds himself young.”

“ Young in years, I hope, Miss Fitzhurst, but still old enough to believe that your true love is a dream, which, like all other dreams, must be interpreted adversely.”

“ Ah, is that it? I thought it was only an old woman’s privilege to interpret dreams? ”

“ Precisely so, Miss Fitzhurst; and a young woman’s fate to find that all her golden ones lead to such an issue. The misfortune is, though, Miss Fitzhurst, that she does not find it out until she herself is qualified to become an interpreter; and then, to all the youthful of her sex, her fate is that of Cassandra.”

“ Sir,” rejoined Fanny, laughingly, “ then were I to prophesy that Mr Pinckney would one day become a gallant gentleman, and a believer in love, would mine be like all other prophecies? ”

“ I fear so, Miss Fitzhurst; a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country. Could they see the prophetess in that for land I’ve left, I have no doubt, however, that then they would believe the prophecy.”

“ Thank you, sir; I owe you one,” replied Fanny, and she made some remark to Colonel Bentley, which Pinckney did not overhear.

“ Do you know, Miss Grattan,” said Pinckney to the lady by his side, in a low voice, “ that our fascinating friend behind us spoke of you so highly, as we rode here; that if she were of my sex, I should say, most decidedly, that she had fallen in love with you.”

“ Did she? ” replied Miss Grattan, tremulously, and with a blush that might have been detected by the moonbeam; “ indeed I know no one whose good opinion I would rather have. But,” rejoined she, with confusion, “ you are jesting with me.”

“ Jesting with you! You do me great injustice. I suppose you have plenty of time to

grow romantic here? And really, notwithstanding Miss Fitzhurst's allegations against me, I should be surprised if you did not. What a beautiful sweep those hills have! And look at the graceful windings of that silvery stream, stealing away like a great and happy life to be lost in the great ocean. Yes! you might fall in love here; have some one who should be

"The ocean to the river of your thoughts."

"Ah!" exclaimed Fanny Fitzhurst, who had overheard the latter part of this remark, "remember, Mr. Pinckney, that you are quoting from a dream—a most powerful poet's dream."

"Yes, Miss Fitzhurst, you have me fairly; for that dream tells of two beings, the life of one of whom ended in madness, and both in misery. Remember that dream was 'shaped out like a reality, and from a reality. It was a foregone conclusion.'

Here the party had approached so near the huskers as to be seen distinctly by them. This was apparent from the increased and ambitious alacrity with which they worked, and the evident effect which they tried to throw into their song. When Nat, the singer, saw them coming, he did not join the chorus of the last verse, but paused longer than usual before he commenced again. He was taxing his powers to produce something extemporeaneous in honour of the ladies. His gifts as an improvisatore were proven by the following verse, which he gave forth in his best manner:

"The man likes corn, and we like he,
Wid the possum fat and the homine,
O! the ladies come; don't you see e'm dar?
Their lovely eyes shine like a star.
O! clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Clar de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
Old Virginny never tire."

"There's poetry and romance for you, Miss Fanny Fitzhurst," said Pinckney, with a hearty laugh.

"In intention, at least, Mr Howard Pinckney," rejoined Fanny, "and that, when it is good, makes the humblest offering preiseworthy."

"True, true; and truth in this instance is poetry's handmaid. We have the authority of the poets of all time for comparing the ladies' eyes to stars. They are not only brilliant, like the stars, but like them they control our destiny."

"At the foot of an oak, near the west end of the corn heap, not at all satisfied, so far, with the events of the evening, sat Pompey. He had mingled with the huskers but for a short time after Nat commenced his song; when, complaining that he could not keep time with such a grunter as the singer, he withdrew from among them. He sat wrapped up in an old coat with his back against the tree to keep the cold off, and with his feet and part of his person entirely covered with corn-husks. His wool was amplified into the dimensions of an ancient wig, and his hat was crooked a little on one side on the top of it, as much from an air of self-importance, as for the purpose of hearing the conversation of his companion. Bobby had his hands thrust into the pockets of his pantaloons, which were made of the stuff called corduroy, and considerably worn. The collar of his jacket was turned up, and the brim of his hat turned down so as to meet it, and keep him, as he said, as snug as a possum in a gum tree.

It was not at all cool to any one who was exercising the least; but after walking and husking a short time the worthies paused from their labours and sat down, when feeling slightly chilled they had resorted to the mode of keeping themselves comfortable which we have described. At Bobby's feet, by way of a footstove, Towzer, his dog, was crouching. Every now and then, when the huskers sang remarkably loud, Towzer would lift his head lazily from his master's feet, glance carelessly around, and nestle in the corn husks again. Occasionally Bobby would pat him on the head, when he would wag his tail, and gather himself up closer to his master's person.

"Ah," exclaimed Bobby, "look out in the moonlight, Pompey, there's Miss Fanny—I forgot cousin Peggy told me to ask Miss Fanny if she would want her at the big house to-morrow."

"There's time enough," said Pompey. "Master Bobby, aint that Colonel Bentley there?"

"Yes," said Bobby, "I believe it is."

At this point Nat Ramsay rolled forth his compliment to the ladies. Pompey jerked his hat over his eyes as he heard it, and exclaimed—

"Mr. Bobby, now just listen to that nigger—he's in liquor now, he's in liquor—inebriated,

an' he thinks he's taking the shine off of everything. To give you a hidear, Mister Bobby, or what a fool nigger that Nat is, I'll tell you. You diskiver and obseve that one day I driv my young mistress, Miss Fanny, over to Miss Bentley's, and I was a setting on my coach box a thinking a great many things. I can think my hardest on a coach box. In the midst of it here comes Nat Ramsey, black as the driven charcoal, toting his big foot right by Miss Bentley's door, between me and the coach and the house."

"But I tell you, Pompey," observed Bobby, "Nat can't help it if he has such a leg. It aint his fault—he cut it with an axe last winter, and now it's all out of shape."

"It's hard drint, Mister Bobby, it's hard drinak—he gets 'ebriated. Well, as I was telling you, there he comes, black as the driven charcoal, right between me and the house, and sure enough he stops. You know he's a Guinney nigger—he was caught on the Gold Coast when a boy, running wild as a baboon, and brought to this country to be sold as a slave, and civilized. For my part, I was born in my master's family; and so was my mother and father before me. Well, Nat didn't know that I knowed whar he come from, and so we got to talking 'bout the difference between a coloured man and a nigger; and I lightened him on the subject. I told him what are a fact, that a nigger is a black man what comes from over the waters, an' that a coloured man may be a mulatto or a darkey, but if he is born in this country he can't no how be a nigger. Now aint that plain? I was born in a free country, for I heard Master Sidney say this was a free country in a speacharification, last fourth o' July. I's a American coloured person. Nat, being that he's born in Guinney, is a African nigger. Nat was hit all aback, I tell you. He tried to laugh, an' chawed and hawed right out. Colonel Bentley was a standing all this time right by the side, neither of us observed or diskivered him, till he stepped right out and laughed, so I thought Nat would ha' turned white with shame."

"What did Colonel Bentley say?" asked Bobby.

"When he had done a laughing at Nat, he put his hand in his pocket and give me a half-dollar. He said I was a magician in argufication."

"Did'nt he give Nat anything?" asked Bobby, archly.

"Yes, replied Pompey, "he give him a half-dollar too, for sticking up for his country—a pretty country to stick up for—that's what the colonel said he give it for; but sticking up for one's country, Mr Bobby, aint argufication."

"Indeed, Pompey," said Bobby, "I must leave you; I'll be back again; but I must go up to the house and ask Miss Fanny if she will want cousin Peggy."

"Mister Bobby, before you go, just oblige old Pompey so much as to get him a drink of the whisky. As I have not been husking much, Sambo might want to say no to me; an' I don't want to object myself to insults from any African nigger."

"Yes, I'll get it for you," replied Bobby. "Keep Towser there—Towser! stay back, sir. The dog which had arisen now lay down again; and Pompey, as Bobby went to obtain the liquor, said, patting the dog:

"Keep still, Towser; I like you, old pup—I like Mr Bobby, too—he good to Pompey, accommodating—Pompey good to him. I should ha' catched a awful scorching in the woods thare from that varmint Thompson, if it hadn't been for Mister Bobby. He would ha' shot him to a certainty, if he had put the weight of that stick on Pompey. I never could diskiver or obseve how any one so small as Mister Bobby could have so much spunk in him. Ah there comes Master Bobby; hang that horse, I wish he had been racing in Nat Ramsey's country afore he had throwed Mr Bobby."

"Here, Pompey," said Bobby, advancing to the negro, and handing him a tin cup, "here's the stuff."

"Won't you take some first, Mr Bobby?"

"No, Pompey; cousin Peggy will find it out if I do, and granny will talk all day about it—I can't neither; I'm weakly, and can't stand it. Come, Towser."

And Bobby whistled to his dog, stood for a moment listening to the song of the huskers, and hastened to the house after the party, to deliver the message of his cousin Peggy.

CHAPTER IX.

Bobby soon reached the house. It was a comfortable two-story brick building. Its best room was on the ground-floor. The windows of this room opened three feet or more above the

grassy yard, in which, on this side of the house, there were many cedar trees. Clinging around and above the windows was a wild vine, which Miss Grattan had taught to spread its graceful tendrils about them. Seeing the light from the windows, and hearing the voices, Bobby walked up to it. The centre and lower pane happened to be broken; and the lad leaned his arms on the sill of the window and looked in, while Towzer stretched himself at his feet. A curtain spread its folds on either side of the window, and partly obstructed an observation of the room from the point where Bobby stood through every pane except the broken one, which being in the centre was not hidden at all by the drapery. There was still an obstacle in the way of Bobby's vision, and that was the wig-covered head of Mr Bronson, which was within a foot of the broken glass, and towered up nearly to the top of it. Bobby could only catch glimpses of the room on either side of Mr Bronson's head, and an imperfect view over it. While Bobby stood there Colonel Bentley observed him. A sudden thought seemed to strike the colonel. He arose from the side of Miss Fitzhurst, by whom he had been sitting, passed out, and walking round to the side of the house, touched Bobby on the shoulder. The boy turned round, when the colonel stepped aside from the window under the shade of the trees, and beckoned Bobby to him.

"Bobby, I want you to do something for me."

"What's that, colonel? I expect I can do it."

"Wait till I return into the house and then stretch your hand into the window and pull that fellow's wig off—"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Hush; don't laugh so."

"Colonel, I wanted to do it of myself, but I musn't—granny would never let me hear the last of it, and it would displease Mr Elwood."

"Bobby, I know you don't like Bronson."

"To be sure I don't, sir. Didn't he call out to me the other day in meeting. He said I made the noise when it was Joe Giles, and he knew it. And you see granny's religious-like; and if she hears it she'll pester me to death. I don't hide that I don't like him."

"I don't like him either, Bobby."

"Folks say so, sir. They say he's a courting over at your house as well as here."

"The devil they do. The plebeian rascal—he never was there but on business in his life. I tell you what it is; if you will do it I'll give you that beautiful little fowling-piece, with the powder-horn and shot-bag complete."

"Will you indeed, colonel?"

"I will, upon my honour."

"Then hang me if I don't do it," said Bobby. "Mind, colonel, the gun, powder-horn, and shot-bag complete."

"Yes: and plenty of powder and shot into the bargain."

"I'll do it, sir. When shall I have the things?" asked Bobby, as the colonel was leaving him to enter the house.

"To-morrow morning early, if you come for them. Wait until I get into the house before you do it."

As the colonel walked away, Bobby turned and beheld a cat with its back bent up in a belligerent attitude towards Towzer. A sudden thought struck Bobby, by which he believed he could save himself from the risk of discovery. He felt that the cat in her fear of the dog would, if held to the window, having first been held to her foe, make an effort to escape into the room, which doubtless was familiar to her, and where her instinct told her she would be in security. And he knew that by giving her tail a pinch and pull at the instant, it would mingle fury with her fear.

In the mean time Colonel Bentley re-entered the room, and, as he resumed his seat by Fanny, he asked:

"Did you really, Miss Fitzhurst, mean what you said, when you remarked the other day that you considered there was no impropriety in wearing false hair?"

"I do really think so, colonel," replied Fanny, in a satirical tone. "Pray, what suggested this profoundly interesting question to you?"

"Mr Bronson there, Miss Fanny, has some pretensions to pretty, as I am told; and as I

disagree with you in opinion, suppose you take my arm, and we step up to him and ask him the question?"

"Colonel, you are pleased to be facetious! I never ask Mr Bronson any questions, sir, but the price of his ribbons."

"Well, Miss Fitzhurst, as you won't ask him, I must do so myself. Do listen to his answers, and observe him."

Accordingly, the colonel advanced to Bronson, where he sat by the window, beside Miss Grattan, who was listening to the conversation of Mr Pluckney, who was seated on the other side and said:

"Mr Bronson, I have had a dispute with a lady, sir, which, as you are the oldest man in the company (Bronson looked grave at this, but endeavoured to look honoured), and the most rigid in your morals, I have determined to leave to you."

"What's that, Colonel Bentley?" asked Bronson, putting on an amiable look."

"Do you think, sir, it is proper to wear false hair?—a wig, for instance?"

"Colonel, sir—I do, I—"

At this instant the angry growl of a cat was heard at the window; the next moment, looking as furious as an enraged wild one, it sprang on Bronson's head, and fixed its claws deep into his wig.

With a cry of horror Bronson started to his feet, and dashed the cat from her perch. The animal fell to the floor, but bore the wig with it; and furious with the pain which the blow and fall had inflicted, she tore and bit it at a desperate rate.

The ladies ran to the gentlemen for protection, while Bronson, for a moment, stood speechless and motionless like Hamlet, the Dane, when he sees the ghost of his father. Recovering himself, he caught up the chair on which he had been seated, and made at the cat.

"Hiss cat!" ejaculated the colonel. The affrighted animal at this darted into the passage, the door of which chanced to be open, leaving the tattered wig beyond the barber's art.

"Really, sir," said Colonel Bentley to Bronson, "I should not have been surprised if your hair had stood on end at the sinfulness of my question, but I had no idea that it would run away with affright."

Amidst the confusion, and forgetting his cousin Peggy's request, Bobby hurried away to mingle with the huskers, and escape suspicion, if any should arise as to whether the cat had any instigator to its misdeeds. Bobby had some fears, for Towzer had barked fiercely when he heard the din within. He found Pompey where he had left him, seated snug against the tree, and a little elevated by the drink which he had obtained for him. The huskers were engaged might and main. They had nearly gotten through with their labour, and it was very doubtful which side would gain the victory, for their respective piles, though very much reduced, were about the same size. A large pile of loose and rustling husks had accumulated behind the workmen, while some ten feet before them the husked corn, thrown into a heap, glittered in the moon-beam. Nat, in the intensity with which he worked, had ceased his song; silence prevailed, except now and then when some enthusiastic negro would send forth a shout that started the echoes around. The negroes of each party glanced at the pile of their opponents, and in intense and low tones, exhorted their comrades to "go ahead." Each party seemed fearful that the other might discover the exertions they were making. It was an interesting scene.

"They'll soon be done, Mister Bobby," said Pompey, "you diskiver and observe they're going their death; it'll be about a tye. I don't take much interest in it. But I want to wait and get a bit of something to eat, and may be I'll give 'em a touch on my violeene. Somebody has hid Nat Ramsey's away—the nigger was jumping about here just after you went, axing everybody if they had seen his "fiddle." He call his violeene a fiddle. It's just so with vulgar persons. He hates it, so he stopped his pipes. I never liked his singing no how. He thinks he can play the violeene. But he don't even understand how to hold it. He jams it up-way down below his shoulder. Now that's not the way to hold a violeene. You must hold it light an' easy, and just rest it agin the shoulder. And another thing, Master Bobby, them are niggers what works in the cornfield you know, and does everything about the farm; they are a kind of stiff in the joints, they aint got the touch in the eend of their fingers to make a violeene speak. And as for Nat's singing; I assure you, Master Bobby, that I has heard a

the gentleman in the circus boat, that very Nat Ramsey all hollow at one of his own nigger songs."

"Who is that?" asked Bobby.

"Why, Mister Bobby, it's Mr Rice—Mister Jim Rice."

"I heard Jack Gordon speak of him," said Bobby, "an' I must go and hear him some of these nights when we stay in town."

"Yes, I assure you, Mister Bobby, he can do it. When he comed out he was blacked an' cower, and I would ha' sworne he was a real African nigger. He had them same kind of legs, an' his leg seemed right in the middle of his foot." Here a loud, prolonged shout disturbed the further conversation of our worthies.

"Hurra for our side!" shouted Nat Ramsey; and, notwithstanding the condition of his foot, he threw himself in the corn husks and rolled about in delight, throwing them over him as a frolic swimmer would sport with the waves.

"Look here," exclaimed one of the opposite party, a black, named Cæsar, belonging to Mr Elwood, kicking the husks aside where Nat had worked, "see how they've shayed and whiseled—I ax you if dem ar husks haint got corn in 'em."

Nat jumped up, and throwing aside the husks of the other party, he picked up several ears of corn with the husks on them.

"Look a here now; I wonder if them are aint got corn in 'em too. You don't think niggers is as cute at coons, do ye, to find every single corn. There's some o' your side husking yet; dar a heap afore em as big as a barrel."

This part, plain to every eye, decided the victory.

"The Lord ha' mercy," exclaimed Nat, going to the tree where he had deposited his fiddle; "did anybody ever see the like of the niggers about here? Come, help me look for it, boys; it's smashed I speck, or stole."

While some of Nat's friends were assisting him to search for his fiddle, Pompey was called on for a tune. The husks were cleared away from the place where Pompey sat preparatory to a dance. The old fellow brought forth his violin with great dignity, arose, and placed his back against the tree with his hat off, and removing the husks from his foot so that he might keep time with it, he gave them the juba song in great style.

When Bobby saw Pompey fully under way he went to the spot where Nat was looking for his fiddle. After affecting to assist him in the search for a few moments, Bobby looked up into the crotch of a tree, a foot or two above his head, and pointing to an object, he asked Nat if that was not his fiddle.

"Master Bobby, you're right—the very cretur," said Nat, taking the instrument from the place; "concarn it, who could put it thar?"

"Cæsar," said Bobby to that person, "tell Pompey that I had to go home." I musn't stay for him, said he to himself, but I must get up early and go for the gun.

Bobby congratulated himself as he proceeded on the successful issue of the trick. He stopped short; and placing his hands upon his knees, laughed aloud at the idea of the ridiculous figure which the bald pate of Bronson cut of which, ere he retreated, he had suffered himself to snateh a glance. As Bobby jogged on he looked round through the woods, and thought to himself what gunning he should have therein, and with such a gun—the very best one he had ever seen.

Bobby was interrupted in his pleasant reveries by the quick tramp of horses, which he thought from the sound must be descending a precipitous bridle-path which led to the hills. Bobby listened and looked, and in a few moments distinguished two horsemen entering the road on which he trod. The road, an old country one, led round the hills by the property of Mr Fitzhurst and Elwood to a mill, which some years before the date of our narrative had been burnt down by the carelessness of the miller. Since this event the road was of no use to any one but Mr Fitzhurst and Mr Elwood, in the transportation of their wood or grain from distant parts of their property.

Bobby wondered who the horsemen could be, and what they were after. As they approached him they seemed in anxious conversation, and Bobby, without any fear, but with the desire of observing them unnoticed, withdrew to the shadow of the wood at the very point that Mr Fitzhurst's lane, which passed through his estate, let into the old road.

"You think it's all right, then," Bobby heard one of the horsemen say, as they neared the spot.

"Yes, I'm up," replied the other, whom Bobby recognised both by voice and person as being Jack Gordon. "You ride on to the village in that way," continued Gordon, "and I'll cut through this lane. We'd better not be seen together; I know the folks all about here, and can take liberties. And I've got other reasons too, that I'll tell you of some day; don't be so fast." They had slackened the pace of their steeds as they drew near the mouth of Fitzhurst's lane, and this enabled Bobby to hear so much of what was said. At the last remark of Gordon they stopped, and he asked:

"Do you think that husking match is over yet?"

"I should say not," replied Gordon's companion, who wore his hat very much over his face, which prevented the lad from observing his features.

"Then I'll push ahead," replied Gordon, "and meet me at the village to-morrow—keep dark."

"Never fear me," replied the other person. So saying, they put spurs to their horses, and parted company; Gordon entering the lane, and the other pursuing the road.

"Gordon's at some devilmint," said Bobby to himself, as he stepped into the lane again. "There now, I forgot to tell him what cousin Peggy said. Jack Gordon won't bear watching. I've forgot twice to-night what cousin Peggy told me. I wonder what he's after."

When Bobby passed by Mr Fitzhurst's mansion it was wrapped in profound repose. As he approached his home, the sound of a horse's tread broke suddenly on his ear, as if it had just started from some point or other. In a musing mood, he quietly entered the back door of his grandmother's humble dwelling, and stole to bed.

CHAPTER X.

Bobby was up with day-dawn in the morning on his way to Colonel Bentley's, which was a mile or more from his granny's, for the purpose of closing the fulfilment of the promise made him on the previous evening.

The colonel had not yet arisen when Bobby reached his residence. On learning the fact, the boy sat down very impatiently by the front door, determined not to leave until he had received the "gun, powder-horn, and shot-bag complete."

At last Colonel Bentley, having been informed by a servant that Bobby was at the door, made his appearance, bearing in his hand the gun and its appendages.

"Good morning, Bobby," quoth the colonel.

"Good morning, colonel," rejoined Bobby, eyeing the gun.

"Bob, you certainly managed adroitly last evening, ha, ha. I wonder if Bronson has another wig!"

"I don't know indeed, colonel. Did the cat use that one up?"

"Pretty much so, Bobby. Here, Bobby," handing him the gun, &c., "you must never mention this affair."

"Me mention it! It was the very thing I was going to ask you, colonel. If it gets out they'll be for playing the deuce with me. But aint this gun a peeler. Thank you, colonel, I must go home," said Bobby, as he arose to depart.

"Take care of yourself, Bobby."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the delighted lad, as he proceeded homeward. If ever since his misfortune Bobby dwelt upon his shadow with complacency, it was now as he beheld it elongated by the morning sun, with all his brave equipments. As he marked his shadow almost stretching across the road, his egotism mounted nearly as high as Richard's when, after that worthy's successful suit with Lady Ann, he resolved to buy a looking-glass. Bobby for once thought with what pleasure he would stand plumply before Jack Gordon's mirror, and take a good look, at least, at the comeliness of the gun, powder-horn, and shot-bag, when properly arranged on his person.

As it was yet quite early in the morning, Bobby concluded that he would go on to Mr Fitzhurst, where he could deliver his message of the previous evening, which he had forgotten; and learn from Miss Rachellina if his cousin's services would be needed at the mansion

that day. Accordingly he resolved to pass by his grandmother's, which was situated between Miss Bentley's and Mr Fitzhurst's, if when he got there he found the family were not up. He had scarcely formed this resolution, while he still gazed at the shadow of his gun, when a well-known voice addressed him :

"Bobby, where did you get that gun? Aint you ashamed, you, to leave the door open this morning on your poor old granny?—aint you a pretty boy?"

"Cousin Peggy, indeed I shut the door after me; I ask you, what do you always call me boy for? aint I seventeen come next May? I don't suppose I am always to be a boy?"

"Always to be a boy!" rejoined Peggy, repeating his language and laughing; "shall I call you a man then? I was seventeen a year ago, and I believe I am a girl, Mr Man! Your'e thinking about your shadow, Bobby—that I caught you looking at, though you don't like Jack Gordon's looking glass."

"If a girl is a woman at seventeen, and folks say she is, I want to know why a boy aint a man. I hope, cousin Peggy, you are not making game, 'cause I am stunted."

"No, Bobly, I am not—that's your misfortune, not your fault," said Peggy, in a serious tone; "it would be a sin if I did—I am sure I never thought the less of you on that account; but where did you get that gun?"

Bobby felt perfectly reconciled to his boyhood by this remark; and to the interrogation, he replied:—

"Isn't she a peeler? she's mounted with silver, and has a gold touch-hole—that's to keep her from burning out. Then here's a powder-horn and shot-bag in style. Cousin Peggy, the birds 'll have to look out, I tell you—I'll shoot you and granny just as many as you want. Do you see where the old road comes in by the burnt house? now suppose that black thing was a bird"—As Bobby spoke, he elevated his gun as if to take an aim at the object, which was within ten feet of him; when at the very instant, Mr Bronson, well mounted on his gelding, issued from the side of the house into the road on which Peggy and her cousin stood. He had his hat tied over his ears with a large, black, silk pocket-handkerchief, and was on his way to the city to renew the lost honours of his brow."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mr Bronson, dodging his head, and jerking his horse back, as he beheld the gun pointed at him.

Bobby shouldered the gun, and said, "Good morning, Mr Bronson."

"Bob—Robert Gammon, a little more, sir, and you don't know what might have happened. Merciful father! such a sudden death—such an unaccounted for life! Are you aware, Robert Gammon, that it is against the law to be firing on the highway?"

"Why, Mr Bronson, I was only making believe here to cousin Peggy."

"Ay, Peggy, my good girl, how do you do? how is your grandmother?"

"Granny is still ailing, sir; but we hope she will be better soon."

"Let me tell you, Robert," exclaimed Mr Bronson, turning to the boy, "you do very wrong to be trifling with fire-arms. Have you forgotten Mr Thompson's business already? your grandmother told me, after you had threatened my friend, Mr Thompson's life, that she would not suffer you to have a gun. I shudder to think of the consequences if you had discharged that instrument of death. The result would have been the death of a peaceable, I may say, I hope, pious and useful citizen, in the harmless pursuit of his vocation, shot down on the public highway—murder!" (Here Bronson caught the eye of Bobby fixed keenly on him.) "I don't say that you would have designedly shot me—heaven forbid that any one should entertain any such feeling against me. But you might have been hung, nevertheless. Circumstances would have worn the appearance of evil intention, very evil intention. Suppose the evil one had caused you to fire at the very moment I appeared—the evil one I say—wouldn't that have been murder? And that, I take it, is what the lawyers call being moved by the instigation of the devil."

"If the old boy had instigated, as you call it," said Bobby, with a cunning smile, "I couldn't ha' done any harm,—this gun is like some people's heads, Mr Bronson."

"Robert Gammon, what do you mean by that?" said Bronson, with a menacing look."

"Cause she empty, Mr Bronson," replied the lad, with a simple smile.

"Robert, I do not know what to make of you," said Bronson, endeavouring to hide his

indignation under the cloak of pity. "Before you were thrown from Mr Fitzhurst's racer, you were comparatively a steady, sober, sedate lad—I never had any fault to find with you, but that you were fond of the improper and carnal gatherings of horse races, but in that you had the example of your betters, and you got your bread by it. But, poor child, since your fall, I agree with my friend, Doctor McVittee, who is of the opinion that the confusion on your head and shoulders has caused an aberration of mind."

"What do you mean by that, sir, Mr Bronson?" inquired Bobby.

"Poor lad! Robert, Robert, you are very ignorant. Why, in the name of mercy, in consideration of your welfare here and hereafter, does not your grandmother compel you to go to school? Peggy, my good girl, why don't you prevail on your grandmother, and use your influence with this misguided lad to make him go to school?"

"He's agoing, sir, in the winter. But, O! Mr Bronson, what's the matter with your head?"

"An accident, Peggy, my good girl; an accident."

"What does that word mean, though, Mr Bronson? I want to know that."

"Robert, indeed, you are very ignorant: how old are you?"

"Seventeen, come next May, sir."

"It means, Robert, that Dr McVittee and myself are of opinion, that since you were thrown from Mr Fitzhurst's horse—it is not your fault, Robert, only inasmuch as you would ride races—it is our opinion that since that unfortunate event for you, that at times you are a little flighty."

"Mr Bronson," said Bobby, in a tone of sympathy, "I hope the eat what jumped on your head there, and cut up so, didn't hurt you?"

"When did you hear that?" inquired Bronson, with much confusion.

"Last night, at Mr Elwood's husking, sir."

"What did folks say about it, Robert?"

"They said it was a trying sight. Hangnation, but I hope, though, that the eat didn't bite or scratch your head; did it, Mr Bronson?"

"Robert, do you mean to be impertinent?"

"Impertinent! I don't know what that means. Folks say that if the eat did bite you, it will be awful; she was raving mad; she bit a dog that's going to have the hydrophobia."

"The hydrophobia," exclaimed Bronson, horror-stricken; "impossible! Mercy! impossible!"

"Folks say so, sir," rejoined Bobby; "but, Mr Bronson, did the varmit bite or scratch you?"

"Robert, my good boy, I fear so; I fear so—I did not examine my head particularly this morning, but I did think I see a bite or scratch there. It can't be a bite; my God! it can't be a bite!"

"Are you sure it is only a scratch, Mr Bronson?" asked Bobby.

"Sure, sure, no, I'm not sure; come here, my good children—Peggy, my good girl, come there."

Mr Bronson, so speaking, dismounted, and with nervous haste untied the handkerchief and took off his hat. He had another handkerchief tied close round his head in the place of the wig, for he was very careful of his health, and was fearful that he might take cold. This he jerked off, and presenting his head to the inspection of Peggy and Bobby, said—

"See, my good children; see—are there any marks, any scratches, any bites?"

"Yes, sir. Mr Bronson, there's one right on the tiptop of your head," said Bobby; and at the same instant, unobserved, he contrived to hit the horse with his gun. Bronson had dropped the bridle as he sprung from the horse, and the animal, on being stricken by Bobby, darted with a neigh round the corner of the burnt house in full speed for his stable in the village.

"My horse! my head!" ejaculated Bronson; "catch him; catch him."

"He's too quick for me, sir," said Bobby; "he's off, as hard as he can go it."

"What shall I do, what shall I do?" exclaimed Bronson, trying to feel the affected part with his finger; "look, Peggy, my good girl, is it very bad?"

The bewilderment of Peggy at the whole scene had prevented her usual loquacity. Now

directly appealed to, she examined Bronson's head particularly, and could not but observe, quite a large scratch across his crown.

"Yes, sir; it is some hurt," said Peggy.

"Mercy, is it a bite or a scratch?" eagerly inquired Mr Bronson.

"Indeed, sir, I can't tell," said Peggy; "but it looks to me like a scratch—it is long across the head."

"I hope it is not, but it may be a bite" said Bobby.

"Yes, it may be, it may be," exclaimed Bronson, clasping his hands together; "I may go mad; the creature was certainly furious, rabid, mad, herself; and I may go mad."

At this Peggy started from Bronson's side, and got some feet from him, when she stood staring at him in evident alarm.

"If I was you; Mr Bronson," said Bobby, "as you know Doctor McVitte knows everything, I would go right off to Springdale and ask him."

"But my horse is gone," said Bronson, wofully; "it will take me so long to get there; come; go with me—I may go mad on the road."

"Then I'd best not go with you, sir," said Bobby; "cause you know, Mr Bronson, if you should go mad on the road, you'd be for jumping right at me to bite me, and then I'd have to shoot you down to save myself—I must load my gun."

"Wait, wait," exclaimed Bronson, springing up, "wait till I'm off;" and, so speaking, he darted round the burnt house, and made with all speed for Springdale.

"Bobby, what does this mean?" asked Peggy, in a moment.

Bobby was too busily engaged in loading his gun to reply. As soon as he had done so, he discharged it upon the track of the flying Bronson, and said:

"That'll quicken his speed. Hangnation, if he was to go mad I'd much rather shoot him down than I would the poor cat."

Then the ridiculous figure Bronson cut occurred to Bobby, and he threw himself on the side of the road, clapped his hands, struck his heels together, and shouted with laughter.

"Bobby—Robert Gammon," exclaimed Peggy, angrily, "what does all this mean?—a second time I ask, won't you tell me?"

Bobby arose to his feet and told his cousin all that had occurred, except his own agency in the matter.

"My stars," said Peggy; "you say, Bobby, that a mad cat jumped right through the window on to Mr Bronson's head, bit and scratched him, tore his wig off, and tore it up."

"Maybe she might a'eat it," said Bobby, "for what I knows. It would be just like such a wild varmint if she was to—"

"What become of the cat, Bobby?"

"I don't know, cousin Peggy. Folks say that she hissed an' spluttered, and snarled about the room like mad; and for a good reason, she was raving mad."

"An' the thing bit big head."

"You saw it, cousin Peggy."

"Yes, yes; I did so. It looked like a scratch; but a scratch, Bobby, may be just as bad as a bite. And if Mr Bronson don't go right off hydrophobia crazy now, yet he may some time or other. Joe James didn't go mad, it was said, till more than a year after he was bitten by squire Norris's dog. Some people thought it was drink that made him carry on so; but the best judging thought it was the bite. I know one thing."

"What's that, cousin Peggy?"

"Why, I wonder how Miss Grattan ever could 've thought in the first place of having such a looking man as Bronson."

"Looks is nothing, cousin Peggy," said Bobby, quickly.

"Well, he's not only an ill-favoured man, but he is an ill-grained man, I believe, in spite of his church-going; and then he's old enough to be Miss Grattan's father, and she's such a sweet young lady. As I was saying, I don't see how she could ever have thought of having him, but if she has—if she has made up her mind, if I was in her place I would change it,—I couldn't be made to have him—only to think, Bobby, who can tell at what time he may go mad—it may come on him like the thief in the night, in the very night he's married, and he might bite his poor young wife to death before any one could get to her. No, if I was Miss Grattan I wouldn't stand it."

" What's one man's meat is another man's poison," said Bobby, " there'll be another *wig* to make, that's certain, if he lives,—I hope he won't go mad for he's not worth the powder that would blow his brains out. He speaks against everybody—I reckon I understand his big words better an' he thinks I do. He runs down everybody, cousin Peggy,—I want to know did you see Jack Gordon last night?"

" Did you see him, Mr Bobby?" said Peggy, with some confusion, but with the effort to look archly.

" Yes, I did see him."

" You did, Robert Gammon?" Bobby nodded his head solemnly. " Then why didnt you tell him to come and take his glass away. That's a pretty way to do what I ask you."

" How did you know I didnt tell him?"

Peggy made no reply, but hummed carelessly the words of the Scotch song:

" Come up the back stair when you're coming to see,
But come as you were na' coming to me."

The words of the song irritated Bobby, for he said, " Cousin Peggy, if folks come as they wasn't coming to see me, I'd tell 'em to talk as if they warnt talking about me."

" What do you mean by that?" asked Peggy, with alarmed curiosity.

" I said to myself that I wouldnt tell you, but I will. The last time I was at Springdale there was Jack Gordon, Joe Hitt, and the miller, afore Mr Bronson's door, and all a little corned. They got to cutting at me because I always walk by your side to church; and Jack Gordon asked me if I did it to keep the dogs off. I told him I was not big enough to keep the dogs off; but that I was too much for a puppy. At this he got right red in the face, and the other fellers laughed at him. Then he asked me if I had ever kissed you. Well I havnt kissed you since I was so high, though I am your born cousin; but I told him that if I had he hadn't. He laughed outright such an infernal laugh, and said I had better keep beside you. An' I think so, too."

" What do you mean, Robert Gammon?" said Peggy, angrily.

" Cousin Peggy, so help me God, and that's what they say in the court-house when they kiss the bible, an' its perjury to break the oath, now I've got a gun, so help me God, if them chaps get ____."

" I thought," exclaimed Peggy, " that that gun would lead you into mischief; you've got to threatening already."

" If you had heard Jack Gordon?"

" He lies," said Peggy, " he never kissed me; I never scarcely shake hands with him. But you believed him, you mean thing, you believed him; and so you don't go with me to meeting and about, because I'm your cousin, and for relationship, but to keep a watch on me? That's it; go your ways, Robert Gammon, go your ways; you can go your gaite an' I'll go mine; I've done with you." And Peggy walked away from him, indignantly, and burst into tears.

" Cousin Peggy, indeed?" exclaimed Bobby, advancing to her, " I didnt;" but Peggy forbade him to speak to her, and hastened away.

" Hangnation to Jack Gordon, the gun, and everything!" said Bobby, as he threw himself beneath a tree by the road side, and cast a regardless eye upon his gun which he tossed carelessly from him.

CHAPTER XI.

A FEW weeks after Howard Pinckney had arrived at Holly, we find him alone in his room on a cloudy autumnal day, when the wind moaned and sighed through the branches of the trees, from which the whirling leaves fell by thousands. Pinckney's feelings seemed in unison with the day. Sidney Fitzhurst had gone to town, whither Pinckney had declined accompanying him, saying, " Excuse me, I'm not in the vein."

After Sidney left, Pinckney sat for a short time conversing with Fanny, when seizing the first opportunity to leave her without abruptness, he gracefully withdrew and repaired to his chamber. He closed the door, stirred the fire which he had requested should be lighted, and paced his apartment like one who felt restless and unhappy. One moment he would pause before his window with folded arms, and look out upon the hills on which the dark masses of

cloud seemed to rest; and the next, he would turn and bend his brow to the floor, and with quickening footsteps tread it.

"While through the shadowy past,
Like a tomb-searcher, memory ran,
Lifting each shroud that time had cast
O'er buried hopes."

At last he drew his large travelling trunk near the fire and seated himself beside it. After opening it, he took from it a small case or casket, which he unlocked with a key that was suspended to his watch-chain. The casket contained several rings of great value, and a number of letters, most of them written in a female hand, together with a miniature of a lovely woman. The miniature was beautifully set in gold, and in the back of it a lock of fine dark hair was inserted. There was a singular expression in Pinckney's countenance as his eye rested on it, a frown clouded his brow, while a smile, that had a touch of sorrow, played upon his lip.

"A fair, false face," said he to himself, "and yet how beautiful—thy power is departing, even the memory of it grows dim. My heart is like the ocean after a storm, a fearful storm; while the fragments of my hopes are around me, a calm has come so deadly, that those very hopes sleep in its bosom, as though they wished not life—sought death. Yes! I could gaze upon you now," said he, looking upon the miniature, "and feel as little emotion as your image feels beneath my eye. But to no one, to man nor to woman, will I ever tell, or shall they ever know, all you have made me suffer. The hell of passions—jealousy, love, pride, hate—have all at once been at war within my heart, have scathed it like the angry elements when they meet in wrath and desolate the earth; but the blackness and desolation that they leave may afterwards produce a more abundant fertility—you have not scared me to the quick, my gentle goddess. I have discovered that my worship was idolatry, and when I reach the true shrine my zeal shall be the more constant; yet how she wrote, and in such language, beyond her sex's custom."

So speaking, he opened one of the letters and read as follows:

"My dearest Howard:

"In the land of your birth, which is to be that of my adoption, mine own becomes yours.

"East, west, alas! I care not whither,
So thou art safe—I'm with thee."

In that land of yours the travellers hold there were fountains of perennial flow, from which they might drink and perpetuate their youth and comeliness. Our hearts shall be unto our loves such a fountain; and like the waters in the vale of Avoca, they shall mingle into one.

"As you discovered my secret without my knowledge, as Romeo discovered Juliet—I, like her, throw off my maidenly reserve, and give utterance to the language of my heart. Though descended from American parents—but an Italian by birth—my native skies have touched my heart with Italian influences and feelings. To meet some one whom I could love, and on whom with undoubting faith I could fling all the wealth of my heart, has been the only dream to which my imagination has been constant. And if, sometimes, o'er the heaven of my hope a cloud arose, the winged torch-bearer would flash the mists away and reveal the star. O! Howard, Howard! your letters speak such a strength of love, that while my heart echoes it I feel my pen cannot express it. And yet confess, do you not think less of me for attempting it—is there not a feeling in your sex, which, while it hoards a woman's love with a miser's care, yet experiences a sensation of coldness towards her when she tells it? While your sex tell their love with a prodigality of language, and while they expect all devotedness from ours, why is it that there is so much waywardness mingled with it, for I maintain that your sex are much more wayward and capricious—start not—in love than mine own. When a woman gives her love, she gives her all—her diffidence may have kept it hidden in her heart for a while, but that very secrecy increases its powers like the restrained waters of a torrent, which, when they break forth, can never be rolled back again. Tell me, tell me, do you not think less of me because I have spoken so plainly to you? You are a Southerner, and while your blood is all meridian, yet is it not, tell me, is it not sometimes capricious in its currents, if not

ley in its flow? I will believe that you will never suffer it to become frozen towards me; but am I as sure that it will never become chilled?"

"Chilled!" exclaimed Pinckney with bitterness; "yes, it is chilled, and I would that it were frozen. But," said he, and he made the quotation from his favourite slowly, like one who is impressed with the truth of every word, "I suppose she thinks

‘The deepest stream that ever froze,
Can only o'er the surface close;
The living stream lies quick below,
And flow'st and cannot cease to flow.’

"But why should I read them? Often," said he, as he placed the letters and likeness in the casket, and locked it within his trunk, "often have I determined to destroy those memorials, as I have flattered myself I had overcome my foolish passion. But what folly! the very effort that I vainly make to destroy them, shows that some of the old feeling survives. There let them remain; yes, there they shall be until they are as indifferent to my eyes as the commonest object in nature, which I look on without being aware of it."

Here the sound of Fanny's voice, as she sung and accompanied herself on the piano, reached Pinckney's ears. He pushed the trunk from him, arose, and with scrupulous care adjusted his dress before the glass; and after taking two or three turns up and down the room, as if to compose his feelings, he repaired to her presence.

As Pinckney entered the room, Fanny arose from the piano, humming as she did so the words of the song:

‘It's good to be off with the old love
Before you are on with the new.’

"Do you believe that, Mr Pinckney?" she asked gaily. The shadow of a moment passed over Pinckney's brow, and then he answered as gaily.

"Had I experience, Miss Fitzhurst, I should probably say with the poet. But I am no believer in love, as I have told you, and therefore my advice would be not to be on with any love at all. Love is the vitality of a novel, the life of it; but to life itself, to the reality, it is the simoom of the desert to the flower that springs by the fountain; it withers up both fountain and flower. There," said he, changing his tone, and seating himself beside her, "in so fair a presence have I not spoken like a most sceptical cynic? But, Miss Fitzhurst, maybe I have found the grapes sour."

"I should really think so myself," said Fanny, "sometimes, did not brother and others give such account of the smiles you have won."

"And lost," interrupted Pinckney; "say they nothing of the smiles I have won and—lost?"

"No, not a word of what you have lost; as their authority for what you had won was probably an autobiographical account, the hiatus may be accounted for."

"You are severe, Miss Fitzhurst, this morning; what has perplexed you? would not your curls obey the schooling of your fingers or your maids? or were you disappointed in getting your new bonnet yesterday?"

"No, sir; neither of those awful calamities has occurred. I have my hair this morning plain as a Madonna's, not because of the merits of the morning, but because it suited my whims. And as for new bonnets, I am condemned all this winter to the country, Mr Pinckney, and a new bonnet would be my aversion, for it would put me in mind of town."

"I am to be envied," said Pinckney. "How many of the gay gallants of the city would like to have the pleasure of sharing your exile. Alas! there is this great difference, however, that you sigh for town, while you put me in raptures with the country. There be those in town who could make you think, are there, that the country was a paradise?"

"No, sir," said Fanny, with perhaps a little frankness, as though she were provoked at the levity of Pinckney; "no, sir; there be no such person either in town or country."

Pinckney fixed his eye for a moment on the carpet, and then, laughing, said: "I am like many an unfortunate fellow who is envied for what I acknowledge is most enviable; but for that which may eventually make him miserable."

"You said that quite gallantly, Mr Pinckney. Like many a dramatic gentleman whom I

have seen upon the stage, who, having been often applauded for the fine way with which he uttered compliment by rote, always does it with a consciousness—”

“ That his fair listener deserves it,” said Pinckney, continuing the sentence; “ come, will you not play for me ? ”

“ Certainly, sir. And as you would have me believe that you are the victim of unrequited love, O ! la—”

“ You do me wrong, Miss Fitzhurst, I am as heartless as the bamboo that grows up without a heart—hollow.”

“ There is many a true word spoken in jest. I don’t believe you are capable of love. You are a male flirt and a flatterer. But, sir, hoping that some day you may require by art, what you have not by nature,—a heart,—I will sing you a song on ‘ Love.’ The words were written by a college chum of brother’s, so you may say of them what you please; but I’d have you know, sir, that I set them to music myself.”

LOVE.

Love has a home in every heart,
A consecrated shrine,—
The natural and the schooled in art
Both hail him as divine;
One greets him with a smile or nod,
The other as a household god.

Love has a home in every heart,
Yet there are some who love
As though it came but to depart,
To rest not, but to rove;
As soon that are for summer born,
Wee the rich flowers and fly the thorn.

Love has a home in every heart,
And there are some who love
As though it formed of life a part,
And blessed them from above:
A dream, which when awake they keep,
And yet they do not wake to weep.

Love has a home in Mary’s heart,
‘Twas Henry placed him there,
And taught him many a wily art,
And many a burning prayer:
Happy love ! who would not be
Nestling in that heart with thee ?

Love has a home in Henry’s heart,
‘Twas Mary’s eye and smile
That struck him with the Parthian dart,
She trembling all the while;
Half fearless, and yet half afraid,
He whispered to the blushing maid.

Love has a home in every heart,
And O ! how happy they,
Who when they their deep trust impart
Throw not their love away,
But who receive for what they give
A love that bids their passion live.

CHAPTER XII.

“ WHAT a great admirer you are of Byron, Mr Pinckney,” said Fanny.

“ Yes, Miss Fitzhurst, I love his poetry as much as ever lady loved himself. Byron is as remarkable an instance as can be quoted in proof of the fact that circumstances hold a controlling influence over, give the hue and colour to talent, while they develope it.”

“ How ? ” asked Fanny.

“ In his early youth he was very poor; by the death of his uncle he received his title and fortune, at a time of life when so sudden a change of fortune would be very apt to have an injurious effect on an unregulated mind like his. He burst into tears, such was the proud swelling of his heart, the first time he was called Lord Byron. Such a susceptible and sensitive spirit should have been most carefully watched and instructed. How was he instructed ? The mother was more wayward even than the son; and, withal, the victim of that vice that makes a man a brute, and a woman a fiend. Stop,” said Pinckney, “ excuse me one moment; I saw an article to-day in the library, in a late number of the ‘ Edinburgh Review,’ which is written with a force of language that is seldom surpassed—I will get the review.”

Pinckney left the room, and Fanny sat musing upon his literary enthusiasm. He returned in a moment and read as follows :

“ The pretty fable by which the Duchess of Orleans illustrated the character of her son, the regent, might be with little change applied to Byron. All the fairies save one had been bidden to his cradle. All the gossips had been profuse in their gifts: one had bestowed nobility, another genius, a third beauty; the malignant elf, who had been uninvited, came last, and unable to reverse what her sister had done for their favourite, mixed up a curse with every blessing. The young peer had great intellectual gifts, yet there was an unsound part in his mind. He had naturally a generous and tender heart, but his temper was wayward and irritable. He had a head which statuaries loved to copy, and a foot, the deformity of which

the beggar in the street remarked. But, capriciously as nature had dealt with him, the relative to whom the office of forming his character was assigned was more capricious still. She passed from paroxysms of rage to paroxysms of fondness; at one time stifled him with caresses, at another insulting his deformity."

"Yes, that is true," said Fanny.

"All, except where the review says that there was an unsound part in Byron's mind; and it certainly must have called forth all his penetration to have discovered that. Byron had violent passions, and they often eclipsed his judgment; but his letters, and particularly his journal, show that the sagacity of his observation was equal to the brilliancy of his genius. His mother would fly in a passion, and throw the shovel and tongs at him; at other times she would run furiously out of the room, and as she did she so, he would exclaim, 'Exit Mrs. Byron in a rage.' To such a height did their natural misunderstanding arise, and such was their mutual idea of each other's temper, that after one of their quarrels, they both have been known to slip round to the apothecary's to inquire if the other had been there to purchase poison. At school Byron was not remarkable for anything except for his fighting propensities and very superior talents for declamation, which leave us no reason to doubt that if he had devoted himself to oratory, Brougham and Canning would have had a fearful rival—in all human probability, a superior."

"But, Mr Pinckney," interrupted Fanny, "did not Byron make one or two speeches in the House of Lords, but without remarkable success?"

"He did; but that does not prove that he would not eventually have succeeded. Sheridan who failed himself in his first attempt, and who, one of the best judges of character and talent, frequently advised Byron to turn his attention to oratory, told him that he felt satisfied he would succeed if he did. Oratory is the art of all others the most difficult to excel in—with one or two exceptions almost every great orator has failed in his first attempts. Byron had all the qualifications to make an orator—voice, manner, expression of countenance, depth of passion, wit, sarcasm, sublimity, and he possessed a fearlessness which would have given him full power in the combat over all their intellectual weapons. In all probability if he had not inherited a title, but had been compelled to devote himself to a profession, he would now have been the first statesman of the day, the Chatham of the age."

"Mr Pinckney," said Fanny, smiling at his enthusiasm, and yet fascinated by the deep tones of his voice and the intense lustre of his eye, "the world would say that there is great speculation in that opinion."

Pinckney smiled in return, but continued. "Not so much speculation as at first blush appears. Canning was a devotee to literature. At the age of seventeen he wrote many numbers of the 'Microcosm.' He has written a satire and fugitive pieces of poetry which are beautiful. It was imperious poverty which drove him into the arena of politics. He set out with the determination of becoming prime minister of Great Britain, and succeeded, but the wear and tear of ambition laid him prematurely in the grave. If we may conclude from Byron's superiority over Canning in literature that he would have been as far his superior in politics if he had devoted himself to them, there could be no comparison between the two. But I weary you."

"No, no," said Fanny, impatiently, "go on; unless," she added, in a sarcastic tone, "it has just occurred to you that you are wasting your breath upon a woman, and a very young one."

Pinckney gazed on Fanny for a moment with an eye of open admiration, ere he said, "Byron, Miss Fitzhurst, we are told once stood before the glass, and as he contemplated his pale features said, 'I should like to die of consumption.' 'Why so?' asked a friend who was by. 'Because,' he replied, 'the women would say, 'poor Byron! how interesting he looks.' A common-place man would call that affectation and folly, but one who can appreciate such gorgeous dreams of beauty as Byron personified—such creations as Zuleika, Medora, Zelia—would say that it was the intense passion of a poet for an abiding interest in gentle hearts; a longing to have those interested in his fate who suggested to his imagination such life—devoted love—and such matchless beauty."

"My own Medora, sure thy song is sad—
In Conrad's absence wouldst thou have it glad?"

"Therefore, before your fair self would he wish to be vindicated. At school, as I have observed, Byron was remarkable only for his fighting propensities and his powers of declamation. He was self-willed, obstinate, and wayward, but frank and generous. His friendships were at least as lasting as his enmities. The letters he received from his school-fellows he treasured up—he delighted to read them in after years, and to dwell upon the companions of his boyhood. He was the champion of all the smaller boys, and would suffer none of the larger ones to domineer over them. These are high traits in a boy. His first love—his strongest and his purest—loved another; and this unrequited affection cost him many a pang. How coldly she treated the unknown and fameless boy. She afterwards repented, but alas! too late—her regrets came like the monarch's gift to the dying philosopher. In that, to me the best of his poems, how elegantly he describes his feelings when he dreamed that Miss Chaworth loved him not:—

As the sweet moon on the horizon verge
The maid was on the eve of womanhood;
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shewing on him; he had look'd
Upon it till it could not pass away:
He had no breath, no being, but in hers;
She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
But trembled on her words; she was his sight,
For his eye followed hers, and saw with hers,
Which colour'd all his objects; he had ceased
To live within himself—she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all upon a tone,
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,
And his cheek change tempestuously—his heart
Unknowing of its cause of agony,
But she in these fond feelings had no share..

"Oh! how beautiful," exclaimed Fanny with enthusiasm; "I have read the dream often, but I never felt that passage so forcibly before."

Pinckney bowed, and flattered by Fanny's evident attention, he continued:

"Byron flew from love to seek fame, and published his first poem, the 'Hours of Idleness.' Fame at first was as unkind as his mistress. The unmerciful and unmanly critique of the 'Edinburgh Review' on them, bruised his feelings to the heart's core. He tells us himself, that on the evening he read the review he drank three bottles of wine, but oblivion would not come. He soon determined on a better course than oblivion—he set to work, and wrote his satire of the 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' and damned his foes to everlasting fame. He reminds me of Curran, who said that he was always frightened to death in the Court-house until one day the judge insulted him. 'When, sir,' said he, 'I looked him steadily in the eye and broke out upon him, and he has not looked me in the eye since.' So it was with Byron, he met the

"Lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall."

And the lion roused him as gently as a sucking dove. To a spirit so proud and haughty, and acutely sensitive as Byron's, such a triumph as this must have given moments of intense and burning exultation. After the publication of 'The English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,' he repaired to the Continent, where he travelled, and wrote the first cantos of Childe Harold, and returned and published it. On its publication the 'Edinburgh Review,' who had said that Byron's first poem was 'fit for neither God nor man,' declared that he was the first poet of the age. It but echoed public opinion throughout Great Britain. Thus, he who had left England unnoticed, and almost unknown, returned to be courted and eulogized more than any other man in the kingdom. For him the daily press teemed with approbation; for him the fete was given; the proud courted him; the ambitious sought his applause. For Lord Byron the brilliant hall was lighted; for Lord Byron beauty wore her most winning smiles, and put on all her fascinations—it was discovered that he had the head and bust of an Apollo; his address, too, was so insinuating, there was such blandness in his smile—his very deformity was a grace, it made him so interesting. What young man would

not have been guilty of indiscretions under such circumstances? What old man's head would they not have turned? Amidst all this, Byron met Miss Millbanke, a beauty, a fortune, a favourite; one, too, who wrote poetry and loved it; quite a blue, blue as the sky, but without storm or cloud.

‘Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers.’

How interesting to be the town talk, and to reform such a man. They were married; soon quarrelled and separated. The fashion, then, like that from abundant sleeves to no-sleeves at all, changed completely. It became the rage to abuse Byron. He was called vain, conceited, haughty, overbearing,—a perfect monster, with passions darker than the darkest he had drawn. His deformity was pointed at, in proof that he was the limp of the old one, with the curse stamped upon him, like Cain's, by the hand of Deity. All the hearts that might, or could, or should, or would have been broken by him, now were up in judgment against him; and many an old dowager and many a young duchess abused the abominable Byron. Those who thought themselves entitled to be the talk, but whom he had entirely eclipsed, now made at him. What a beautiful moral spectacle! Lady Caroline Lamb published her celebrated novel of ‘Glenarvon,’ in which his character was so darkly painted, and which it was said contained many of his letters to her. But one of your sex, I think he states, had boldness enough to be his friend. In this state of things he left England to return no more. The ban of ostracism was against him—whether justly or unjustly, I shall not pretend to determine. I mention all this to show how greatly circumstances influenced the development of his talent, as well as his morals. He had all that ambition can aspire to—fame, fortune, friends, the world's applause; he drained the burning bowl to the dregs. Yet amidst it all, he could not be happy. Look at his early life. Think of his temperament, his sensibilities, his passions, his untutored youth, his pride. His mother, had she been a mother to him—his father was in his grave, but his memory was a stain and a reproach. His first affections were blighted. He plunged in revel, perhaps in crime, to forget it. But think of the peasant poet's prayer, who resembled the peer much—

‘Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.’

And, in reflecting upon it, it will perhaps occur to us that, from the differences of men's impulses arose the justice of the text, ‘judge not.’ He published his first poems; they were satirised—he retaliated. His reputation came upon him so suddenly, that, as he himself said, ‘he awoke one morning and found himself famous.’ He ran his brief career of splendid misery, for unhappiness was at his heart even then. He was banished by public opinion, without the public knowing anything of the facts of the case in which they condemned him. Let me repeat you his own language on the subject; I have it by rote, and it is as eloquent a passage as any in his poetry. He says, ‘I felt that if what was whispered, and muttered, and murmured was true, I was unfit for England; if false, England was unfit for me.’ I withdrew, but this was not enough. In other countries, in Switzerland, in the shadow of the Alps, and by the blue depth of the lakes, I was pursued and breathed upon by the same blight. I crossed the mountains, but it was the same; so I went a little farther, and settled myself by the waves of the Adriatic, like the stag at bay, who betakes himself to the waters.’

“Indeed,” said Fanny, “that is eloquent.”

“Disgust, satiety, wounded pride, impaired health, were his companions in exile. Then came forth the dark strains of his muse, in which loathing and love, sardonic laughter, heartfelt anguish, misery and pride, were so strangely and so strongly blended. His soul was a chaos of passion, and his poetry expressed his soul. His was

‘The settled, ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore,
That will not look beyond the tomb,
But cannot hope for peace before.’”

All at once, remembering the length of his talk, Pinckney stopped abruptly, and in some confusion.

“Ah, Mr Pinckney,” said Fanny, shaking her head, “but he should ‘have looked beyond

the tomb.' Oh ! you enthusiast, I did not think you were capable of as much admiration of anything—of a man, not to speak of a woman. Well, sir, you have treated me like a rational being to-day !"

Take my arm, Miss Fitzhurst, will you not ? and let us walk. And you believe I have impulses of admiration." Fanny took his arm, and as she did so Pinckney continued, " If you had been anything of a physiognomist, you must have discovered it before ; but no eyes are so blind as those that will not see."

CHAPTER XIII.

As the season advanced Pinckney frequently visited Miss Grattan, and frequently attended Fanny to Mr Elwood's, for between her and Miss Sarah there was a much greater social intercourse than formerly. Fanny began to understand Miss Grattan's character ; she perceived that there was a settled melancholy preying upon her mind, which seemed to be increasing. Yet it was evident that, while Miss Grattan's sensitiveness appeared to be augmented to an almost nervous degree, she loved Fanny's company more and more ; she would press her with almost weeping earnestness not to leave her yet, when Fanny would rise to depart. This was particularly the case when Mr Bronson was present. Fanny considered Bronson as a low, vulgar, unfeeling man, and she could not be made to believe, notwithstanding the reports she had heard, that Miss Grattan could, under any circumstances, possibly consider him as a suitor. She thought that Bronson was the friend of Mr Elwood, and that Miss Grattan received him as such, and was possessed of so shrinking a sensibility, that she knew not how to reject attentions which were evidently revolting to her.

One afternoon, while the girls were sitting together at Mr Elwood's alone, Fanny interrupted the silence of several minutes by saying, with the abruptness of one who cannot refrain from giving utterance to the thought over which she has been brooding—

" Sarah, is it possible that what I hear is true—that you and Mr Bronson are engaged ?"

Sarah clasped her hands together as if startled by an electric shock, fixed her eyes vacantly on the wall for a moment, and then turning them imploringly on Fanny, burst into tears.

Fanny was shocked at the effect which her hasty question had produced. After a moment of amazement she said, taking the hand of Sarah,

" My dear Sarah, you must forgive me ; indeed, I would not have wounded your feelings for the world. I am prejudiced against Mr Bronson."

" Oh ! no, no ; I know you would not wish to wound my feelings. It's not prejudice ; but what shall I do ? I owe my uncle everything—what shall I do ? what can I do if he wishes it ?"

" But, Sarah, I can't think that he does wish it. You are mistaken, if you do not like Mr Bronson ; your uncle would not certainly have you make a sacrifice of your feelings."

" But, Miss Fitzhurst, uncle does not think that there is much feeling on such subjects."

" You do him injustice."

" No, no, no ; but no matter, no matter."

" I am sorry, indeed I am, that I should have spoken so unguardedly," said Fanny ; " but, Sarah, you must not consider me other than as a friend."

" A friend ! I want a friend. Oh ! I have so wished that I could find some one to whom I could unbosom myself. Indeed, Fanny, when I first saw you I thought I should be so happy if I could only find a friend in you, one to whom I might say what I thought, and who would feel for me. Will you listen to me ?"

" Listen to you, yea, Sarah ; but be comforted. I don't see why you should be so cast down."

" Fanny, Miss Fitzhurst, my character and situation have been entirely different from that of most girls. I am an orphan ; I lost my parents when I was so young that I do not even faintly remember them. On their death my uncle brought me to the country, where I was nursed by Aunty Agnes ; you know her, she watched over my infancy. As I grew up I saw no company at all but those who came to visit my uncle. I am entirely ignorant of the formalities of fashionable society, and I have suffered more on that account than I could possibly tell you ;

I have had no one to talk with ; to exchange thoughts with. I brooded over my thoughts and feelings in my own mind until I hardly know what I thought or felt myself. What I had seen, and heard, and known, seemed mingled in a confused mass in my memory, and from the want of companionship, and maybe the bias of my character, I grew into a dread of the very society that I panted so much for, which I felt to be a want. I don't know how it was, but an indefinable dread of something that was to happen to me, hung over me like a cloud. I could not escape the idea—it followed me like a shadow ; I had no mother to watch over me, to advise me, to tell me of things of the world, of all around me. If I could write down all the strange and awful feelings I have had, it would fill a volume ; but my life is without an incident. But I was saying, just from this loneliness and want of communion with some one of my own sex whom I could look up to, this dread grew over me. Indeed, I became so superstitious that a thousand things disturb me that I know should not—which have no reason in them ; but it seems a kind of fatality that they should perplex me. But I've nothing to say—what should—what have I to tell you—yes. Well, Mr Bronson has been visiting my uncle's for years past, and some months since he addressed me. I was startled ; I had no idea he thought of me. He said I had given him encouragement, he spoke to my uncle the other day. He, my uncle, had often hinted to me his wishes with regard to Mr Bronson, but lately he has spoken them out directly—indeed, Miss Fitzhurst, almost like a command. He says ; but don't mention it for the world—that there is a necessity that I should marry—should marry Mr Bronson."

" What necessity can there be for such a step, Sarah ?" asked Fanny.

" Indeed I cannot tell, but my uncle says that there is a stern necessity ; my God, it is a necessity to me, indeed."

" And you, Sarah—"

" I have asked for time, for time to think : but I should not have told you this, should I—was it not wrong ! Certainly if I can please my uncle, should I not do it ?"

" No, you should not do it at the sacrifice of your happiness ; certainly not. Marry that Bronson—why I see, Sarah, that you do not love him—that you cannot bear him. I wouldn't—father, aunt, and brother, all combined, could not induce me to marry such a man."

" Don't speak so, Fanny—Miss Fitzhurst, it tortures me. I cannot tell you all now, but—"

The further conversation of the ladies was interrupted by the entrance of Mr Elwood. He was much more kind to his niece than usual, and seemed anxious to keep her in good spirits. Fanny exerted herself for the same purpose. In the evening her brother called with the carriage to take her home, and on the way Fanny could not resist telling him what Sarah had told her. Sidney was very much surprised. As soon as Fanny arrived at home, she hurried to her aunt's room, and after enjoining secrecy on her, as she had on her brother, narrated to Miss Rachellina, with feelings of tearful sympathy for Sarah, and of deep detestation for Bronson, and of condemnation of Mr Elwood, every word that Sarah had uttered. Fanny's heart was full of various emotions ; for after this she gave her aunt an account of the loss of Bronson's wig, to which Miss Rachellina listened with most portentous solemnity, and Fanny recurred to poor Sarah again, and burst into a flood of tears.

" I declare, my niece," said Miss Rachellina, " you are quite hysterical ; you act worse than if you had been reading a novel."

" This is worse than a novel, my dear aunt—it is a reality."

" It is shocking, certainly, my niece ; but I cannot think that Mr Elwood would wish to force his niece into a marriage connection against her will with such a man ; though, for my part, I can see not the least harm in the mere circumstance of his wearing false hair, nor why you should laugh one moment and cry the next, in such a childish manner. It is decidedly unbecoming of you as Miss Frances Fitzhurst. There, you have your bonnet on. You come rushing into my room, my niece, as nervous as if the house was on fire. See, you have spoilt that new satin ribbon on your bonnet with your tears. Upon my word and honour you wiped your eyes with it. Now, Fanny, that is acting without the least reflection—a child, Fanny, a child would have done just so. I don't blame you, niece, for having your sympathies awakened for Miss Grattan. Mr Bronson is certainly a very common, vulgar spoken person, and not fit even to be the waiter of a lady of refinement and delicacy, both of which qualities Miss Grattan, considering her advantages and education, eminently possesses. Indeed, I have

wondered, repeatedly, why Miss Bentley receives him as she does ; but she must be polite to him, as he transacts her business for her. Still, there is reason in all things. But, niece, I wish to impress upon you, that you should on no occasion lose your self-control. It is unbecoming in a lady, and it often leads her into a great many misdeeds."

" My dear aunt," exclaimed Fanny, rather pettishly, " by the time I have learned to control all my feelings I shall have lost them all."

" No, niece, that is speaking irreverently," said Miss Rachellina, fondly. " I hope I have all the warmth of my early feelings ; I am sure my young days have not been gone so long that I should not have them—but I pride myself on my self-control. No woman can be a perfect and finished lady, I assure you, niece, who has it not. I have had to school myself to acquire it, I don't deny. All that I wish is to impress upon you the necessity of doing so too. You have no idea in what a flurry you entered my chamber ! Your bonnet-strings were all flying loose. I suppose you had not tied them at all. The collar of your cloak—your new cloak—was all rumpled in ; enough to put it out of set for ever ; and your side hair was all uncurled and dangling on your cheek. My child, I would not wound your feelings unnecessarily, but you looked frightful. Suppose I had been in the parlour, and I might just as likely as not have been there, and suppose Mr Pinckney had been sitting with me, you would, I suppose, have bounced right in to tell me this, looking as you do. Indeed, if you had, I should have wished the floor to open and swallow me up. I can assure you, niece, I have known engagements broken off by gentlemen, yes, by gentlemen, on discovering the lady's extreme want of personal neatness. There is no excuse for the want of it in a lady. I say, decidedly, no excuse whatever. Let me beg of you never to make your appearance anywhere—not even in my room, looking so dowdy, when you have pretended to dress yourself. I tremble to think if I had been in the parlour with Mr Pinckney, such a polished and accomplished gentleman, and you had come dashing in in such a flurry of face and dress. Niece, I am exceedingly sorry to learn that Mr Pinckney leaves us in a few days."

" Leave us in a few days !" ejaculated Fanny ; " this is the first I've heard of it."

" Yes, niece ; he told me so this afternoon, after he returned from town, where he received a letter, which, he says, requires him to be at home soon. I regret it very much ; we shall all miss him. I discovered the other day that an uncle of his, who is dead, was an old beau of mine. Where are you going, Fanny ?"

" I am going to my room to arrange my dress, aunt."

" My dear niece, what you have told me about Miss Grattan, poor thing, and then Mr Pinckney's going to leave us too, has quite unsettled me. Fanny, if you see Pompey, tell him to bring me a slice of the poundcake which he will find in the side board ; that which has plums in it ; the other is not quite done. Dickson is getting quite careless with the pastry and cakes lately ; tell him to bring me that on the salver, with a glass of wine."

Fanny obeyed her aunt's request. She then went to her room, where she with much care removed all the traces of negligence and " flurry," as her aunt expressed it, from her dress and fair countenance, and then proceeded to the drawing-room. On looking in, she discovered no one there but her father asleep on the sofa ; and wanting a book to amuse her, we suppose, she entered the library, and there found Pinckney seated alone."

" Ah ! Miss Fitzhurst," said he, rising as the lady entered, " you have the impulses of Mother Eve, I discover."

" Yes, sir ; and instead of riding over with brother," replied Fanny, taking a novel from a book-case, and opening it carelessly, as if she were about to leave the room, but lingering for a moment, " instead of riding over with brother, and thereby showing your gallantry to forlorn ladies imprisoned in the country, you choose to mope in the library, and pretend to be literary."

" I was moping, indeed, fairest flower of the wilderness and brightest belle of the city ; but it was in trying to reconcile myself to your absence."

" Then you do leave us, Mr Pinckney ?"

" Yes, Miss Fitzhurst, such is my necessity ; and in a few days. Business ! Hours were made for slaves, and for what was business made but for the same animals ? Business brought me here—other influences threw their fascinations around me, and held me here ; and now business, like the disenchanting wand in some glorious spell, bears me away. In truth, Miss

Fitzhurst, my estate has suffered much in my absence. I have been squandering money, and now I must nurse and attend to it. When shall we two meet again?"

" Neighbo ! I am indeed sorry that you're going. Only think, I shall have no one to dispute with about love, and poetry, and romance, when you are gone. And Miss Grattan—do not fail to make your adieus to her."

" I shall not, indeed ; she is a most interesting lady ; she is deeply attached to you, Miss Fitzhurst, and you should go frequently to see her. I am perswaded she has 'a silent sorrow here,' said Pinckney, laying his hand on his heart. " I feel greatly indebted to your family for their hospitality, Miss Fitzhurst."

" We shall see you again, Mr Pinckney, certainly—you will come this way in the summer, will you not?"

" Will you bid me come, Miss Fitzhurst ? " said Pinckney, advancing to her, and taking her hand.

At this moment the servant entered, and announced tea.

C H A P T E R XIV.

The next day in the afternoon Pinckney proceeded to the city to make arrangements for his departure. On his way in he met Sidney returning home, and communicated to him his intention. Sidney received the information with deep regret.

As Sidney was passing by Granny Gammon's, the old woman hurried to the door, and begged him for mercy's sake to step in a minute, for that something awful had happened to Bobby. Sidney dismounted, and throwing his horse's reins over the pailings, instantly complied.

" Oh, Mister Sidney ! " exclaimed the old woman, tottering aside from the door, to suffer Sidney to enter it, " I'm disgraced, Peggy's disgraced, we're all disgraced—the boy is wilful and worrying ; but I don't believe it—no, as God's my judge, I don't believe it ! "

" What's the matter, granny ?—sit down—where is Peggy ? "

" Gone up to the big house to see your father and you, and everybody, on this very thing—on the poor boy's besalmant—that I should live to see it," she continued, wringing her hands. " I thought my troubles couldn't be worse when he was throw'd from that racer and limated for life ; but they just began then. You see the day before yesterday, he, that's Bobby, was pestering round, and he said as how he meant to go to town. Well, I suspicioned no good of it, and I axed him for what, and he grew deceptious right off, and didn't seem to like to tell. Howsomer, I talked to him so, wo's me, that he up and said that he wanted to go in to go to the circus. Soon as I heard that, I knew that the evil one had beset him—I knew that he was tempted to the pit of iniquity, and deflements, and abominations—I told him he should go on no account ; but in his perversity he'd set his mind right on it, and go he would ; and his cousin Peggy (Peggy Blossom is not the gal she used to be) took side with him, and what could I do ? Consent I couldn't and wouldn't ; I felt that something must happen, and I told them both so, and made my mind a kind up to it. To think of this ; I'd no idea it was coming to this, though. Joe Hitt came out from the city this blessed day, and he stopt in and told us that they had Bobby, my Robert, poor child, Robert Gammon, up for passing counterfeit money."

" It can't be possible, granny—who could have put him up to it ? "

" Who ? Satan, the circus, the black devil himself, with his conjurations that he carries on in them places ; but I don't believe one word of it—I don't believe he'd do such a thing, do you, Mister Sidney ? "

" I do not, indeed, granny ; but what did Joe Hitt tell you about it ? "

" That he was up for passing counterfeit money ; that was all he knewed—that he seed them dragging the poor child through the street ; he was all knocked aback, he says, and he left his horse and cart right in the street, and followed after the crowd a good piece. He says he tried to get a chance to speak to Bobby, but it was too big a crowd ; and that the people told him a site of money was catched on him—Joe Hitt said he couldn't go on to hear tell it,

For fear his horse and cart would run off, and that's all he knewed; but he saw the child as plain as day; he says that Bobby looked at him, but didn't speak—that he seemed bewildered and stunned like. Mr Sidney, oh! can't you do something for him? See, there—there's Tewzer, poor dumb beast, he knows Bobby's in harm—he's been kind a dumpy all day."

"This is a strange business," said Sidney, musing; "when he went in I gave him three hundred dollars, which I had collected at the iron works, to leave with Colonel Bentley."

"You did! my mercies, Mr Sidney; how could you do it? That's it—the evil one has just, on account of his sins, took away the good money, and put the counterfeit in."

"It will all come right, granny, I hope, in spite of the evil one. I have often sent money by Bobby; I have every faith in his integrity. The money I gave him certainly was good, but if it were bad, who could he have attempted to pass it on? I requested him to give it to Colonel Bentley—I desired him to make no purchase whatever."

"O! I have had awful dreams lately; I warned him of it the night of Mr Elwood's hessing; but no, they think I'm old, helpless, and a know-nothing old woman. He's been beset by Satan himself in some lonely part of the road, and has the whole money changed in his pockets unbeknown to him. I mind many years gone by, that old Michael Cash was served that very way. He was an old well-to-do farmer, that's now dead and gone, and he used to tend market of Saturdays. Well, he gets belated with some wild chaps—cronies of his'n, who was no better an they should be; and after drinking with 'em till long after night-fall he starts for home—he always said that his money was safe in his pocket when he left 'em, for he counted it afore 'em, and got on his horse, and come right home—and when he got there, and come to look the next morning for it, there was just nothing but a bit of old rumpled newspaper whers he had put his money. I've often heard him say, after he joined the church, that he believed the devil himself tricked him—for he said as how he felt his head go round by the old grave yard—which everybody knows is haunted, and that his horse a kind of stopt there in spite of him, and jerked down his head so, that the reins went over his neck, and Michael had to get down to get things right again. He says somehow a kind of a stupor overtook him, and that he heard horses gallop by faster than any natural horse could go, and he hardly knows how he got on his horse to get home in such a bewilderment. Some people used to laugh at this, and as some of the money was money that Michael was bringing home for his neighbours, they talked hard agin him; and some said one thing and some said another; but I've heard him tell every word on it after he jined. Mercies, how I'm running on—but the poor bey—you'll see to him; won't you, Mr Sidney?"

"I certainly shall, granny—I'll ride over to the house, instantly change my horse, and return to town. Peggy, I suppose, can tell all that Mitt said?"

"Every word—poor thing, she was in a terrible taking, and hurried up to the big house. I knewed all this was coming," continued the granny, calling out after Sidney as he rode off, "I knewed all this was coming. I've had awful dreams lately," she muttered to herself as she gazed after him.

Sidney on arriving at Holly found Peggy weeping over the misfortunes of her cousin, and between her tears relating, for the twentieth time, what Joe Mitt had said. He could learn nothing more from her than he had already gathered from her grandmother. He therefore ordered another horse, and determined to proceed to the city, where, on inquiring at the Mayor's office or gaol, he hoped to hear the particulars of the boy's case. His fear was that he should not be able to reach the city until some time after night-fall, which might prevent him from being of service to Bobby until the next morning.

Sidney therefore proceeded at a quick pace. As he passed by Granny Gammon's the old woman came to the door, and looked anxiously after him.

He had not advanced more than half way when the gathering shades of night began to render objects indistinct, which warned him to increase his speed. He did so; and as he entered an uninhabited part of the road, that was skirted on either side by tall majestic trees, whose falling leaves and autumnal hues rendered the twilight still darker, just where a bridle-path led to the hills of which we have spoken that bound the western side of Holly, a horse without a rider galloped by him in evident affright, with its bridle broken, and the stirrups clashing against its sides. It occurred to him as he marked the horse, that it was the animal that his friend Pinckney had ridden to the city. He was soon satisfied that such was the fact;

for the horse had scarcely passed him, when it turned its head, neighed as if in token of recognition of the animal he bestrode, and cantered to his side. Sidney grasped the broken bridle, quickly knotted the ends, and hastened down the road to the succour of his friend. He had proceeded nearly a quarter of a mile in fruitless search, which the increasing darkness rendered every moment still more difficult, when he thought he saw a man hurry away at his approach from a spot in the skirt of the wood on the right-hand side of the road.

This awakened his suspicions, and though unarmed, he hurried to the place, without thinking of any danger to himself. The person disappeared rapidly in the forests towards the hills as Sidney drew near. His fears were true; for, on dismounting beside an individual who was stretched insensibly on the ground, he discovered Pinckney. His watch and pocket-book were gone, and he seemed to be wounded, though in what manner Sidney could not discover. Sidney supported Pinckney's head upon his knee, and while in the act of removing his neck-cloth, Pinckney opened his eyes, and after a moment's confusion recognised him.

"Fitzhurst," he said, faintly.

"My God, Pinckney, what has happened?"

"I have encountered a gentleman of the road—that's all. The rascal has given me a dangerous wound. I was stunned by a blow when you came up; have you been here long?" asked Pinckney, as he leaned on his friend, and endeavoured to regain his feet.

"Do you think you can ride?"

"Yes, I hope so—I hope so. He stopped me with a pistol at my breast; and after I had delivered up to him my watch and pocket-book, he snapped it at me. There, my friend, so, place your hand so. This exasperated me, and I struck him a severe blow with my whip, and endeavoured to ride him down, at which he drew a Bowie knife, I suppose it was, and struck at me." Pinckney paused a moment from pain, and continued: "The weapon cut the bridle and pierced my side. The horse sprung from under me as he made another blow, and I, not being able to control him, fell to the ground with great violence. Your coming up must have saved my life, for the ruffian was, I believe, determined to take it."

While Pinckney spoke, with the assistance of Sidney, he uncovered his person, and bound a handkerchief round him, and over the wound which was bleeding profusely. The shadows of night would not permit Sidney to observe the extent of the injury. He assisted his friend on his horse, saying—

"Holly is as near as the city; we had better go that way, and stop at the nearest farm-house; the nearest one to us is in that direction. You could not have staid but a very short time in town."

"But the half of an hour. I expected letters, and not receiving them, there was nothing to detain me in the city. Hang the ruffian, I wish I had been armed. You have net been home?"

"Sidney briefly narrated to Pinckney the purpose of his return, and while he was speaking they reached the farm-house.

Here Sidney examined Pinckney's wound, and as far as he could judge, not having any medical skill, it did not appear to be a dangerous one. The farmer, with his wife, pressed Pinckney to remain beneath their roof through the night, but he insisted that his wound was but a slight one; and after thanking them for their hospitality, he departed with his friend at a slow pace towards Holly.

CHAPTER XV.

The night of the robbery of Pinckney, about nine o'clock, a horseman came in the direction from the hills, and proceeded to Granny Gammon's. He hitched his horse at the palings, and after pausing a moment, perhaps in thought, or perhaps to distinguish the voices of the individuals within, he rapped with the end of his riding whip against the door. Granny Gammon, in a querulous tone, bid him enter.

He did so, and after saluting the old woman in a half-respectful, half-dogged manner, like one who felt he was not liked by her on whose premises he stood, he asked if Peggy was in.

Granny Gammon gave a short cough before she answered. "No, she's out; what would you with my Peggy, Jack Gordon?"

"Has she gone to the village?" proceeded Jack, without answering the question.

"John Gordon, you are no respecter of age," said the old woman, sharply; "I axed you what you wanted with my Peggy."

"Why, granny," said Gordon, in a coaxing tone, "I want to see her."

"She's gone out, I tell you, gone out. The Lord in his mercies be merciful, we're sore afflicted. Are you from the city, Jacky? did you see or hear anything of our Bobby?"

"What's happened?" asked Gordon, throwing himself into a chair.

"Happened! was it you that took him to the circus, Jack Gordon? answer me now that question."

"He took himself, I suppose; I saw him there."

"Well, well, an' do you know anything of this money, of this counterfeiting? In my old age to think of this; the very first of our fam'ly that was ever taken up. Jack Gordon, you've been misleading him."

"I mislead him?" exclaimed Jack, starting; "who said I misled him?"

"I say so; you've been putting races and circuses in his head this long time; and now you see what's come of it."

"Ay, I thought you said, old lady, that I put counterfeiting in his head. I know nothing about it; and as for the circus, I see no more harm in the circus than some people do in the meeting-house."

"John Gordon, don't speak to me in that way; now don't, I tell you. Peggy's not to home, an' I'll just out and tell you, that there's no occasion for yo'r coming here."

"Granny, I suppose if Peggy wants to see me, you don't care?"

"But Peggy don't want to see you, nor I don't want to see you, nor Bobby don't want to see you, an' I can tell you the whole neighbourhood would be mighty glad to get quit of you. I lay the whole ruin of Bobby at your door. Yes, you may look; I do. An' I don't see why people should come where they're not wanted."

"Maybe I can be of service to Bob?"

"No, you can't be of service to him; he's clean ruined now by bad samples. Only to think what a condition I'm in, a lone woman. And Peggy, poor thing, she's gone up to the big house, crying all the way; and I suppose she'll go crying to the village to hear what she can hear."

"Ay, has she!" said Gordon; and, after lingering a moment, he arose, and bidding the old woman good night, left the cabin. Gordon mounted his horse and rode slowly to a clump of trees that stood in an old field, some twenty yards from the house, when he dismounted, and fastened his horse within the shadow. After doing this, Gordon placed himself with his back to a tree, in a situation to command a view of the lane that led by Granny Gammon's to Holly. He had not remained there long when, on hearing footsteps approaching from the village, he stepped forth, and met the person, who proved to be Peggy. He had gained her side, and addressed her before she observed him.

"Is that you, Mr Gordon?" she asked in a tone very different from the lightsome one that was her wont.

"Yes, Peggy, it's me. I was down at the house, but the old woman was in such a brim stone humour, that she fairly turned me out."

"Old woman! brimstone humour! Who are you speaking of, Mr Gordon?"

"You're as short as pie-crust too, Peggy; what's turned up? I'm speaking of your granny."

"Persons wouldn't think you had much opinion of your company, to speak in such a fashion of one's relations, Mr Gordon."

"I've told you often enough what I thought of you, Peggy," said Gordon, in a subdued tone; "it seems you don't think well of me—though it didn't always seem so."

"Have done with that, Jack Gordon: I am in no humour for such talk to-night—good evening; granny's alone, and it's late."

"Not so very late," said Gordon; "we've talked together later than this."

"Well, there's no occasion to waste time hereafter," replied his companion; and she walked on briskly. Gordon, however, kept her side, and asked:

"Peggy, what does all this mean? you didn't use to treat me so."

"I told you the night of the husking what it meant. Granny's against it—Bobby's against it."

"Bobby's against it," exclaimed Gordon, mimicking her in a tone of anger that he seemed unable to suppress. "What do I care for Bobby's being against it? Bobby'll have enough to do to take care of himself."

"And suppose he has," said Peggy, indignantly, "enough to take care of himself. Well, I've got enough to do to take care of myself. Yes, granny's against it; Bobby's against it; to tell you the truth, John Gordon, I'm not for it, and I've told you so before."

"Peggy, stop one moment." Peggy hesitated. "Do stop one moment, Peggy, and listen to me." She stopped. "Why should there be such words between us? I know I spoke tauntingly the other night, and said what I oughtn't say; but you kept throwing up to me what the villagers said about me, and it aggravated me. What do I care for them, Peggy? I tell you I have money enough to buy them. I can make as fine a lady of my wife as is your Miss Fanny. As for Joe Hitt, why, he's a foul blacksmith. I don't see how a girl with a fair skin could come near him, unless she wished to be made black."

"Pretty is that pretty does," interrupted Peggy.

"What does he do that's pretty?" exclaimed Gordon, contemptuously; "the chap's a fool. Peggy, you don't think well enough of yourself. Bill Hardy's of no account—he mills; gets a few dollars a week by the hardest kind of labour, and goes about as mealy as a rat from a bin. I can buy and sell both of them."

"And where did you get the money?"

"From the old country, my pretty Peggy; from the old country. I was under the weather at one time, because I was waiting for it; and as I was brought up a gentleman, I couldn't turn my hand to anything but gentlemanly sports to get a living by. People here pretend to say such things are wrong—it's because they know no better where I come from."

"I must go; good night," said Peggy.

"Peggy, not so quick," said Gordon, seizing her arm; "you think to cast me off in your tantrums; and, I suppose, if it's for neither Joe Hitt or Bill Hardy, it's for cousin Bobby, whose name you don't seem to like to mention to-night."

"He, not to you; for if the boy's gone wrong, it's you that's to answer for it."

"I answer for it! do you mean I led him to counterfeiting. By G—d, I let nobody say that of me."

"Tell that in the village. I don't say it of you," exclaimed Peggy.

"If a man was to say it of me, I'd have his heart's blood!" continued Gordon, "but, Peggy, I've borne from you what I never bore from man or woman before; and all, Peggy, for the love of you; but I've found you out. It's 'cousin Bobby' that cuts us all out. Yes, 'cousin Bobby';—whew! you're against me, after all that's past, just because folks don't choose to like me, and think hard things against me: what will you say to 'cousin Bobby' now, when he's done the thing?"

"Done it! I don't believe it; the whole world couldn't make me believe it," exclaimed Peggy, bursting into tears, and stepping away from Gordon.

Gordon compressed his lips, as if with a stern resolution he was suppressing an emotion, and then said soothingly:

"Peggy, if you'll consent to that—if you say you'll have me, Bobby shall be cleared. He shall—I'll swear to you on a stack of bibles. I like him; and I've money to buy them land sharks up, and make 'em talk their tongues off, and their brains out for him."

"He's got help, if any one can help him," said Peggy, proudly.

"What help?"

"As soon as Mr Sidney Fitzhurst heard it he rode right into town; and there he'll see Mr Pinckney; they together will do for him, if anybody can."

"Ha! Mr Pinckney—he's the one that you heard say didn't like my looks. He thinks his looks are mighty taking at Holly, does he? Maybe I know something of him, and know people that didn't like his looks; let him look to himself. I tell you, Peggy, I can help Bobby more than any of them. I know all the officers and deputies in town, an' I'm the boy what can manage 'em. I've got friends afore now out of scrapes worse an' this—let us be friends—say—I know you like your cousin Bobby; I like him, but it aggravates me to hear you repeat

what these village people say against me, and I bolt out in a passion what I don't mean; there's no harm in me towards Bobby; just say that things shall be where they were before our little spat, and I'll stand Bobby's friend. Shake hands and say so, an' if he's not out here by to-morrow night, then never speak to me again."

As Gordon spoke, he took Peggy's hand; when the sound of some one approaching caused her to start, and hasten towards her grandmother's.

Gordon, with a noiseless step, proceeded to the clump of trees, where he stood watching for the walker to go by, ere he mounted his horse. The starlight was bright enough to suffer him to observe the direction the passer-by took. It was directly to granny Gammon's, which he entered immediately after Peggy. When the door had closed on the visitor, Gordon trod with noiseless steps to the house, and placing himself beside the window, where he could look in unobserved, and overhear what was said, he remained for nearly a quarter of an hour.

He then repaired again to the clump of trees, and when the cottage-door opened, to suffer the departure of the visitor, which Gordon knew by the flashing forth of the light, he mounted his horse and rode forward, apparently with the wish to overtake him, though at some distance from the house. On reaching the individual, he said, in a respectful tone:—

"Mr Sidney Fitzhurst, is that you?"

"Yes, it is I; are you Jack Gordon?"

"Yes, sir; Mr Fitzhurst, I was just going to your house to see you. I'm just from town, sir, where I heard that they had Bobby, the old woman's grandson that lives there, up for passing counterfeit money, an' I thought I'd come and tell you, being as I know that you wish him well, and that he's your tenant."

"Yes," replied Sidney; "I'm now returning from his grandmother's, whither I went to speak to the old woman on the subject. Do you know the particulars? I am satisfied the boy is not capable of such a thing. Do you know if they have him in gaol?"

"I don't know, sir, much about it. He went, I believe, to the circus last night; I believe he drank too much there. This morning I heard from one of the neighbours that I met in town that he was in trouble, and as I was bound out to Springdale to-night, I thought I'd ride over to your house and tell you."

"Thank you, Gordon, thank you: I shall ride in to-morrow and see if I can do anything for him: I started this evening. Which way did you come out?"

"Sir, oh! early this afternoon; good night, sir."

"Good night, Jack," replied Sidney as he proceeded homeward.

Gordon turned his horse as if it were his intention to visit Springdale, but after Sidney was out of hearing of the animal's steps he spurred at a brisk rate towards the city.

"I must take a near cut through the hills," he muttered to himself, "where I can change any horse. The thing was done well: I've good proof of what a friend I am to the little limping rascal."

With a fearless rein at the top of his horse's speed Gordon struck for the hills. If his object was to gain the city as soon as possible, a cut through the hills was certainly much shorter than the roundabout way of the road; but then the difficulties in this direction were held hazardous both to man and beast. And surely the night would not facilitate his progress if such were his object. The hills were in many places barren, entirely uncultivated, and scarcely ever traversed, for game was scarce upon them, and they were mostly uninhabited. Here and there where there was a spot capable of cultivation, and there were many such, a miserable shanty might be seen, but it was often uninhabited, and was evidently built for some temporary purpose. In some places through the hills, in strong contrast with the barren and bold masses of rocks, immense forest trees would stretch along for miles, of the shortest and most luxuriant growth. A long tract of wood marked the head of a stream, which was called the Falls. Over the water, and through the wood, and along the very brow of the precipice, Gordon rode as fearlessly as if he had been travelling on the common county turnpike. However, there did not appear any great management of the steed on his part, though, no doubt, the rider was capable of it. The horse seemed to know the road as an old stager would the turnpike, and dashed on apparently with a similar desire to reach the goal. Gordon had perhaps penetrated seven miles into the hills, when he came to a place where the stream ran deep and narrow for a considerable distance between over-

hanging precipices. Here it was so dark that Gordon could scarcely see his hand before him ; yet horse and rider advanced recklessly into the stream, as if its bed were their road. They guided themselves by the glimmering of starlight that flashed from the water, where it broke a way from jutting rock, and hill, and tree, and sported unshadowed. Before, however, he reached the opening, Gordon turned his horse to the right, and spurring him up a steep ledge of rock, he stopped where two huge trees were entirely covered with clustering vines, that descended in such luxuriance from their topmost branches as to dip in the water. A quantity of drift-wood and brush seemed to have floated against the face of the rock, to which there was evidently no approach but by the watery pathway Gordon had chosen. Here Gordon dismounted and busied himself in removing the brush-wood ; while he did so he imitated the rough note of the screech-owl, when a portion of the rock appeared to give way, disclosing an aperture large enough to admit the horse. A very dim light, such as might easily be mistaken for the phosphorescent glimmer from decaying wood, appeared for a moment, and with it disappeared both the horse and rider.

CHAPTER XVI

About an hour after Sidney left the dwelling of granny Gammon, as the granny and her granddaughter sat together talking over Bobby's misfortune, the door opened, and that worthy, covered with mud and dirt, and much exhausted, entered the room.

"Father of all mercies!" ejaculated the old woman, clasping her hands together with an hysterical scream. "Bobby! cousin Bobby!" exclaimed Peggy, springing towards him, and giving relief to her feelings in tears, "we have been so troubled about you."

Towzer leaped upon his master, and then darted around the room in wild delight.

Bobby threw himself on the floor without saying a word. His old grandmother looked at him as if expecting him to speak, and then said impatiently,

"Why don't you speak, child? why don't you speak, after bringing all this trouble on us? Why don't you speak?"

Peggy had taken a seat by Bobby, and was gazing on him intently. As his grandmother spoke he hid his head in his cousin's lap, and said in a low voice,

"Cousin Peggy, you will not believe anything against me, will you?"

"No, Bobby, not a word that goes against your honesty."

"I knew you wouldn't," said Bobby, rising proudly, while the tear started to his eye. "I knew you wouldn't. I'll tell you all about it."

"Do, child," said the old woman, impatiently.

"Well, you know I started off for the circus?"

"Yes, yes; what, Bobby? ha! I always told you about the circus."

"Granny, if you don't let me speak, how can I tell? Well, I went into the circus, and there I saw Jack Gordon and a whole parcel of fellows. But before I went to the circus though, I went to Colonel Bentley to give him the money. Jack Gordon knows I did, for the pin somehow came out of my pocket where I pinned the money in, and it dropped out just as I was standing talking to him. The money was wrapped up in a bit of printed paper, and Gordon said (it was near by Colonel Bentley's lodging place that I met him), he says to me, 'Bobby, you dropped something.' I stooped down and picked up the money. I was so awfully frightened, thinking that something had gone wrong; but I turned in and counted the money, and it was all right. Well, after that, as I couldn't see Colonel Bentley that night, I thought as I'd come in to go to the circus, I'd go."

Here granny Gammon heaved a deep sigh, and shook her head ominously.

"To the circus I went," continued Bobby, affecting not to notice his grandmother, and addressing Peggy, "and everything was right. My own money—two paper dollars, a silver one and a quarter I had in my other pocket, and Colonel Bentley's by itself and pinned down. Well, I'm not a going to tell a story, so I'll tell the whole truth. Jack Gordon got me to drink with him, and so did another fellow. After the circus was out, when we got to the tavern where we were going to stay all night, I treated all round, and all I know is, that the next morning I was seized while I was in bed, and accused of passing counterfeit money. The

constables, or whoever they was, searched my pockets, and there they found ever so much money ; it wasn't the money, though, that Mr Fitzhurst gave me, for that was rolled up in a bit of paper. This looked like newer money. Somebody must have come in my room and tricked me, indeed they must."

"What become of you then, Bobby?" interrupted Peggy.

"Why," said Bobby, "they called it a penitentiary affair, and said they must take me before a squire : they did so, sure enough. They took me away over into old town, where I didn't think a squire would keep, it was in such a mean-looking place. When they got me there, they threatened me awful, but then Jack Gordon came in—and, and—"

"What about Jack Gordon, Bobby?" said Peggy ; "speak it out."

"And Jack Gordon come to me and asked me about it, and I told him everything. He said that he'd stand my friend, but that it was an awful business. He talked to the squire, and the squire said as how as Gordon asked it, that he would keep me locked up till evening in his own house and would not send me to gaol ; and that, by that time, Gordon maybe could get some witnesses for me, and would let my friends know. Then Gordon come and spoke to me—I asked him to keep it away from you if he thought I could be got off without telling you. He promised to do his best for me, and said he was all sorts of a friend of mine. There I staid in that room locked up, hour by hour ; you may know how I felt. While I was standing looking out the window near night time, I see Jack Gordon a laughing and talking in the road with the landlord and the man that searched my pockets, and they were laughing and as merry together as pickpockets. Jack Gordon looked up at the window and saw me, and then they stopped talking together, and Jack said that he would be with me presently. There I staid. It grew long after night—no Jack come, and I began to mistrust something, so I thought I'd get off if I could. I watched round, and after a while I got out of the window softly on to a shed, slipped down into the yard, climbed the fence, and after puzzling about the town at an awful rate, I found the market, and then I knew which way to strike for home—hangnation!"

"You a cussing, Robert, hey ? you a cussing, are you?" said the granny. "What's to be done about this business ? It's an awful sum of money that's lost, child : they'll be after you to a certainty."

"Let them come," said Bobby, "I know I shan't go to them. But if I only could get Mr Sidney's money ! They give me liquor just to trick me—I ought to have knowed it, I ought to have knowed it. I must first see Mr Sidney and tell him the whole truth—I can't help it, I can't help it."

We leave Bobby in the shelter of his grandmother's roof, and return to Jack Gordon. Two hours or more after his mysterious entrance into the cave, in the dead of the night, the quick tramp of his horse's feet might have been heard in the purlieus of the city. He rode quickly on, with the confidence of one to whom the streets were as familiar as the dangerous pathways of the hills, and stopped not until he arrived at the house from which Bobby had a few hours before effected his escape.

The house was a two story frame building, through a shutter of which a dim light twinkled forth. Gordon kept his seat on his horse until after the echoes of its footsteps had died away, apparently for the purpose of listening if any one approached. All was silent, and he threw himself from the horse, peeped into the room through the shutter wherè the light shone forth, and then with confidence stepped to the door, and gave three distinct raps. A voice from within asked "Who's there?" and on Gordon's answering "A true man," the door was immediately opened, and he entered. The person who admitted Gordon was a tall and remarkably slim man, who seemed, as the vulgar phrase is, double-jointed, for he appeared to have the power of bending in any direction. His forehead was villainously low, and his nose long and snipe-like, with very narrow nostrils, notwithstanding which, he did that member the honour to speak through it. He had a small, twinkling, gray eye, which was keenly suspicious in its glance, and conveyed to you the idea that its possessor was both cunning and timid. He was so, though more than once the hope of great gain had led him into acts of daring that had surprised himself.

"Benbow, let me see, my chap," said Gordon to the worthy we have described, for such was his name.

"The bird has flown," said Benbow, trying to throw an honest expression into his face, for he was aware that such was not its habitual one, for even when he told the truth his face seemed to contradict him.

"Flown! Benbow, this is some trick of yours."

"No trick, on my conscience. What motive have I for tricking you? I'm running deep risks to please you—the boy never did me any harm."

"Never did you any harm! And I suppose for that reason you must let him off."

"I tell you I didn't let him off. I went up into the room to see if all was right, and I found that he had hoisted the window and escaped. The risks I ran was for you. I have made up my mind to it, and I did it. Maybe it's a good thing that the boy has gone. I don't believe that you could have convicted him if he had showed a good character, and since you have been gone Tom Fenton was here, and he thought it was a foolish business. He couldn't see what you were after; he says the boy can show a good character, and that old Mr Fitzhurst and his son would stand by him to the last."

"It's not needful that I should tell Tom Fenton what I am after—it's my own business."

"It's our business too, Mr Gordon, I calculate, on my conscience; it's our business, too, if we run risks, sir: and I suppose you'll admit that I'm under some responsibility."

"I told you," said Gordon, "I didn't wish to push matters to the hardest. I wanted the money—I wanted to ruin the character of the boy, and to seem to stand his friend. You've been well paid for it, and be damned to Tom Fenton. And so he's clean gone?"

"Yes, clean gone."

"Well, I suppose I'm somewhat baffled—if the boy's friends come to see you in the matter you must tell them that I stood by him, and stuck to it he could not be guilty. Say the boy was drunk, and hint hard against him. Speak it out, and say you believe him guilty, but that considering his youth it had better be dropped."

"I will, I will, Gordon; but I don't like these proceedings out of the regular business. No good will come of it. You're too fond of going on your own hook, Gordon, and that's the complaint about you. I tell you plumply that's the complaint."

"You're a lilly-livered chap, Benbow; never fear me. Well, I must make the best of these matters—but I wish you'd kept a tighter eye on the little rascal. He's keen, and if he hadn't been so infernally corned—but I must stop, or I suppose you'll get frightened at that child. You think he's gone home, do you?"

"To be sure I do."

"Yes; I suppose he has—I'd like to hear the tale he'll tell. Mind, tell them I was his last friend. Here, give me something to drink—brandy, brandy. I've done more things than one to night, and I must to the hills."

Benbow produced a flask, which he said contained champagne brandy of the highest proof. He bid Gordon say when, as he poured the liquor in a tumbler which that worthy held for the purpose, and it was not until the glass had lost more than half its natural hue that the word was pronounced.

After seeing the bottom of this stump cup, Gordon left the house, and, mounting his horse, departed.

CHAPTER XVII.

SIDNEY with his wounded friend reached Holly with less difficulty than he had imagined. Pinckney's loss of blood, though, was considerable; and on being placed in his chamber, it was with great difficulty he was kept from fainting. Pompey was immediately despatched to the city for the best medical aid. It was not until after daybreak that the surgeon arrived. After examining the wound he expressed himself uncertain as to the extent of it. He thought it critical, if not dangerous; and said he believed the patient had received some inward injury from the violence of his fall from his horse. By his advice, and for the sake of his frequent attendance, Pinckney resolved to remove to the city as soon as practicable. Another consideration which induced this resolution, notwithstanding the pressing invitation of Mr Fitzhurst and his family that he would remain with them, was the fear of the trouble he should give. A week had elapsed, however, and the patient was not yet in a state to be

removed. In the meantime every exertion was used to discover the robber. A description of the stolen watch and pocket-book was left at the pawnbrokers, and published in the public prints, with an account of the contents of the pocket-book, so far as Pinckney could recollect them; but as yet it was without avail. A source of great annoyance to Pinckney was the loss of a peculiarly formed locket, containing the hair of the same lady whose miniature he possessed. From a feeling of delicacy, or from some other motive, he did not mention it in enumerating the contents of the pocket-book.

As soon as Sidney could spare the time from his friend, he turned his attention to Bobby's misfortunes. The boy, after many internal struggles, had called on Sidney the morning after his escape from Benbow's, and narrated to him the circumstances attendant on the loss of the money, just as he related them to his grandmother and cousin. Sidney asked Bobby if he could find his way to the 'squire's where he had been confined. He said he thought he could not, and evidently had no wish to try. Sidney then sent word to the tavern in the village at which Gordon stopped, for that person to call at Holly. In reply to the message, he learned that Gordon was not there; that he had said, on leaving, he should be absent a week or more.

At the expiration of that time Gordon returned to the village; but without waiting on Sidney sent, by Joe Hitt, with apologies for not calling in person, the name and residence of the magistrate from whose house Bobby had escaped. Gordon asked Hitt to say that he would have gone in person to Holly, but that he had pressing business that took him away. That day as Sidney was proceeding to the city, for the purpose of seeing Benbow, he stopped at the village, and there saw Gordon himself, who gave him a full account of all he knew of the matter, as he asserted, making, as he did, so many protestations of his friendship for Bobby.

Gordon offered to accompany Sidney to the magistrate's; but Sidney said it was not worth while, and proceeded thither alone. Benbow gave him no clue to the mystery. He exhibited from among his papers, where he "had it carefully placed, the counterfeit money which had been found on the boy; and told Sidney the name of the tavern-keeper, who lived near-by, at whose house Bobby had been arrested. Thither Sidney repaired, but not before Benbow had repeatedly told him what a friend Gordon was to Bobby, remarking at the same time, as Bobby was young, that the affair had better, on his account, be dropped.

All that the tavern-keeper could inform Sidney of was, that a man offered a note at the bar which was counterfeit; and on being told so, he said he got it from Bobby, who was a stranger to him, and that he had changed it for the boy. The man grew angry; the tavern-keeper asserted and insisted that Bobby should be searched. The search was accordingly made, and the counterfeit money which had been left at the magistrate's was found on the boy. The next day, the man who had changed the note, according to the tavern-keeper, went to Benbow's to appear against Bobby, and returned and said that the magistrate told him the boy had escaped. The witness, after much fault-finding, said that he could not stay and throw more money away; that he lived in the country, and he departed.

For the mere loss of his money Sidney cared not. He was provoked at the villany practised on the boy; but he discovered that at present any effort to find out the perpetrators of it would be fruitless.

Poor Bobby's troubles arising from this matter were not to stop here. The whole village and neighbourhood received with various exaggerations the history of the affair, and somehow or other the majority of them, particularly those in Bobby's own sphere, were disposed to look upon him in a different light from that which the facts warranted. Divers persons had been busy in putting a dark colour on his conduct. Among these, if not the most open, at least of the busiest, were Bronson and Thompson. The consequence was, that whenever Bobby went to the village, or met the villagers, either in groups or singly, he was sure to be questioned on the subject, and had to undergo the infliction of no very delicate hints with regard to the matter. Once he was required to give an account of the manner in which he obtained his gun, and the powder, which, it was asserted, he wasted by the pound. Colonel Bentley happening to pass at the very moment, Bobby appealed to him, and put their fears as to his integrity on that score at rest at once. If the majority were disposed to think ill of the boy, he, nevertheless, had many well-wishers, not only among his own class, but among the wealthier portion of the neighbourhood. Mr Fitzhurst and family were his fast friends.

Indeed the old gentleman felt many misgivings as to the effect which the misfortune at the horse-race might eventually have on the boy's character. Not that he believed him at all a bad boy now, but he began to fear the result of his idle habits upon him, and he resolved to send him to school by way of weaning him from his ways, and give him a liberal education if his capacity proved superior—perhaps push him forward in some profession. When this idea struck the old gentleman, he wonders at himself for not thinking of it before.

While Mr Paul Fitzhurst was indulging his benevolent imaginings in Bobby's behalf, the lad one day, as was much his custom of late, proceeded to the village with his gun on his shoulder. It was the day of the election for members of the legislature, and as the polls were held in the village of Springdale, there was, consequently, a large concourse of people assembled. It being in the afternoon, the political excitement, assisted not a little in its throes by the stimulus resorted to on such occasions, had reached its height. Groups, containing many noisy and drunken men, might have been seen wrangling about the corners, and before the polls, which were held at a tavern window.

In the midst of one of these stood Lawyer Lupton, the gentleman who had formerly been fond of talking with Granny Gammon about certain boundaries while he glanced at Peggy. Mr Lupton was shaking hands and making friends with might and main. To the groups that encompassed Lupton, Bobby stepped up just as the village politician and pettifogger was pressing the hand of Joe Hitt, who had not yet voted, by way of squeezing a vote out of him. The night before Hitt had been to see Peggy, who, having no other person to play off upon him, had been prodigal of the repetition of "cousin Bobby" in her tenderest manner. The memory of this fact had added to the cups in which Hitt had toasted his political sentiments. As Bobby approached, Hitt cast a lowering brow on him, and exclaimed :

"Here, squire, here comes a case; a full blown chap—if he ain't I'm blowed—he thinks himself a man any way you can fix him, though they do say that he did the thing that some men wouldn't. Get him to vote for you."

"He's but a boy, Mr Hitt, he's but a boy," said Mr Lupton, with dignity. "It is the universal law, sir, throughout our whole country, even, I assure you in those states where there is a property qualification—a principle which I am opposed to, gentlemen, *ab initio*, root and branch, as being totally anti-democratic—it is the law, I pledge you my professional reputation—the law in every state that no person is entitled to a vote who is under twenty-one years of age. I approve of it—I go for it—I sanction it heart and hand. I would not have the constitution altered in that respect, though I could get thereby the vote of every child in Christendom. I have no doubt, were such the law here, that my vote would be considerably increased; don't you think so, Bobby, my boy?"

"Why, squire, I haint got a vote yet," said Bobby, "so it's no use to ask the question—though I'm not so far off, neither."

"Not so far off," exclaimed Hitt, contemptuously; "why, you blasted little runt, you—you'll never be a man."

"Joe Hitt, speak when you're spoken to," said Bobby, angrily—"I didn't say I was a man, and I don't believe you're much of a one either."

"Hush up, 'cousin Bobby,'" said Joe, scornfully, and making at the same time a gesture suited to the word, "or I'll serve you as they serve a naughty baby; you can't call on granny, or 'cousin Peggy' here."

"You'd better keep away, and not call on 'granny' or 'cousin Peggy' either," said Bobby, significantly, as he walked away.

Hitt was not an ill-natured man when sober, but he was one of those in whom intoxication awakens the worst passions. This taunt of Bobby maddened him. As the lad walked off Hitt stepped into the middle of the street, and, picking up a stone, threw it at him. The first missed; but a second took effect, and struck Bobby so forcibly on the back that it nearly knocked him down. As soon as Bobby recovered himself, he turned round and faced Hitt, who was in the act of hurling another stone at him. They were by this time thirty or more feet apart. As soon as Bobby turned, he clapped his gun to his shoulder, exclaiming, "I can't stand everything." Hitt had scarcely time to change his position, and save his front, when the whole of the load of Bobby's gun, luckily it was small, bird shot, took effect in the most fleshy part of his person.

Hitt fell to the ground, uttering a yell that awoke an echo from the hills. He rolled over and over, calling out "Murder! I'm a dead man!" in tones that soon drew the crowd from the polls in a mass around him. They bore him into the tavern. On an examination of his wounds by Doctor M'Vittee, they were pronounced not to be mortal.

Thompson, while they were bearing Hitt to the tavern, called on the constable to arrest Bobby. That worthy deemed it his duty to do so, and attended by Thompson, and followed by the crowd, he conducted the unfortunate lad to Squire Norris'a. Here there was a deal of confusion. Popular opinion, however, notwithstanding Bobby had lost ground lately, set in his favour. Thompson openly told the magistrate that it was his duty to commit the rascal to save the lives of the citizens, asserting that his own life was once put in deadly peril by him. Bronson, who had hurried over from his store as soon as he heard of the matter, took the squire aside on pretence of especial business, and advised him by all means to commit Bobby instantly, and to refuse to take any bail. The squire said he'd think about that, but in the meantime he would commit him until Hitt's situation was decidedly known. Deprived, therefore, of his gun, powder-horn, and shot-bag, and attended by a gaping crowd, Bobby was led to the gaol, and locked up with a care that certainly conveyed a high idea of the gaoler's notion of his prowess.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In one of the merchant palaces of the gay city near which we have laid the principal scenes of our narrative, dwelt Richard Langdale, between whom and Pinckney, it was not necessary to mention it before, there had grown up a close intimacy. Whenever Pinckney went to the city he spent his time chiefly with Langdale, and though their characters in many points were entirely different, yet there was something in each that deeply interested the other. Perhaps the difference in their ages, pursuits, and opinions, gave more zest to their friendship than if the affinities between them had been apparently closer. It is often as difficult to account for the impulses of friendship as for those of love, and those of the last we know are of such unaccountable characteristics that the deity who controls them is painted blind.

When he heard of Pinckney's misfortune he visited him daily, taking the surgeon in his carriage with him; and as soon as Pinckney could suffer a removal, Mr Langdale had him borne to apartments in his own house in the city, where he could have every advantage of medical attendance.

Pinckney suffered more from weakness, and consequent nervous irritability, than from his wound, which was healing very fast. He was oppressed with low spirits, which Langdale exerted all his conversational talents to remove. Pinckney was one day so struck with his powers in this respect that he said:

"Langdale, pardon me if I compliment you at the expense of your vocation; but really you are an exception to the generality of merchants. I know that you have held high political stations, and I wonder merchants do not oftener aspire to them."

"Well, that is a wonder, for it can be shown that some of the leading men in the tide of time were merchants. Think how much commerce has done for the world! How much the world is indebted for its enlightenment to commerce. And surely there is as much liberality among merchants as among any other class. I venture to say this, that merchants, take them as a body, are as conversant upon the general matters and concerns of men, apart from professional subjects, as either the professors of medicine or law."

"I am inclined to think you are correct," said Pinckney. "Yet you are generally self-made men."

"Not more so than the generality of lawyers or doctors."

"You have more of a professional air," said Pinckney, "have you not?"

This remark Pinckney felt did not apply to his friend, for Langdale possessed remarkably the air of a man of the world. His address was polished and easy, and his person very handsome. His eye was brightly blue; his nose well formed; his lips full, but expressive; and his forehead high, a slight baldness made it appear higher than it really was. This, with the wrinkles which began to gather about the eye, and as yet only gave to it a shrewd expression, denoted to the observer that Mr Langdale had reached the meridian of life.

"Why, there is an air of great precision about your thoroughbred merchant," replied Langdale to Pinckney's remark, "but not more so than that of the physician, to say nothing of the lawyer."

"Precision is certainly not the characteristic of the lawyer?"

"No, it is not," replied Langdale; "a free air, and an affectation of bustle and business, mark them. Doctors are the most precise race in the world, with the gravest faces. We naturally take our hue from the associations to which we are most accustomed, and as doctors see more death scenes than anything else, their phizae are gravitated, accordingly look like death-heads. A bank clerk has generally a precise air, they are generally very cleanly in their persons. Bank hours are closer kept by them than the trysting time with their lady-love. Instead of the poet saying, 'punctual as lovers to the moment sworn,' he should have said, punctual as bank clerk to the hour of opening. All those connected with banks are generally courteous but prim. It has been to me a source of no small amusement to look around and mark the difference that professions make in the character. At the same time, how amusing to observe individual traits in spite of habits long engendered and the enforced routine, showing themselves and marking the man from the mass."

"Do you think a city life makes a man better?"

"Yes; in the qualities of the rat and the wolf, who congregate to prowl and to plunder. You and I, Pinckney, have looked on life from different positions and associations—now, I'll lay my life you believe in such poetic things as disinterested friendship and devoted love?"

"Why, yes; I hold," said Pinckney, "that such things have been—are, in fact; but I don't believe they are plants that grow spontaneous in every soil."

"You have been in love, then?"

Pinckney really blushed. After a slight hesitancy, he said, "Yes; I have been in love;" and then in a lighter tone he added, "that is, I fancied myself in love. Do you believe a man may love twice?"

"Why not? Yes, I think every man of ardent imagination and southern temperament, like you, who has led a life of easy indolence, which gives the passions the full play of rumination and imagination, has indulged, ere he arrives at your age, in scores of 'fancies,' as a boarding-school miss would say; has perhaps, done all he could in the power of indolence to nurse a little cross of the kind into a sullen misanthropical despair."

Pinckney laughed. It was not a happy laugh, but the laugh of rumination whose retrospection was not all sunshine.

Langdale observed it; but without noticing it, said:

"My life has been somewhat an odd one. The links of events in it have not been all bright ones; there are a great many hard knots in the chain. Love! ha! I fancied myself in love once; maybe I was. I'll tell it to you—there is a moral in it; but situated as you are, I do not think its point will be of any service to you; but it may amuse you. I am," said Langdale, with a smile of self-complacency upon the lip, but with something disagreeable upon the brow, which plainly told that the present could not entirely gild the past, "I am entirely a self-made man. I take a pride in it, Howard, notwithstanding the pain this self-making gives in the operation. How we shrink from pain when enduring it; yet the fact that we have endured has pleasure in it. I am the youngest of five children; my father died when I was fourteen, leaving us nothing but an honest name, and poverty to the lips. I had three brothers and one sister, she next to me, and I loved her with the devotion of my whole heart, more than all the rest of my family together. My brothers were men grown, but they hung loose upon society; and it was plain even to me, then a boy, that their lives, if not criminal, would be obscure, and their ends wretched. My father was a merchant in a very large business, and by indorsements became bankrupt to an immense amount a short time before he died. In fact, it killed him. While he was reputed wealthy my brothers lived in fashionable prodigality, and after his death—but no matter, I need not dwell upon them; two of them are dead, and the other, after scenes which I will not rehearse, went to sea, a sailor before the mast—I have not heard of him since. My mother was compelled to keep boarders; and my sister, then in the bloom of beauty, and she was beautiful, was reduced from being a leading belle, with high expectations, to the drudgery of assisting my mother in the menial offices about the house. I was almost the servant of the boarders. Faith, Pinckney, the very heart

of boyhood is corrupt. The youths of expectations about town, my former associates, knew me no more. Then it was that the iron entered into my soul. To make the bitterness still more bitter, an adventurer, a boarder in our house, won the affection of my sister, married and left her in a month. A year afterwards my mother and myself were almost the only attendants on her funeral. My mother did not long survive my beloved sister. While she was lying on her death-bed the officers of the law entered her room with an execution at the suit of the livery-stable keeper from whom the hearse for my sister's funeral had been hired. My poor mother looked at me when she heard the purpose of the intruder, and said, in the very bitterness of her soul, 'My child, it will not cost much for my funeral, there is no one to attend to it but yourself. Oh God!' she added in an altered tone, 'that I should leave you so destitute!' saying which she covered her eyes, as if to shut from them some terrible sight, murmured a prayer, cast on me a glance of unutterable woe, and never spoke after."

Langdale rose, and paced the apartment, hurriedly, several times, and then stopping by the couch of Pinckney, he said;

" 'Tis strange that I should call up these things after so many years have transpired, and after striving so long to forget them. What an intense egotism there is in our very sorrows Pinckney. I pass over my mother's funeral. How often, in a melancholy, if not misanthropical moment like the present, I have wished that I had passed away with it, and had been placed by the side of my mother and sister. You know for what a worldly man I am taken by the mass, for a cold, callous, worldly man. I hope I am mistaken in my species as much as they are mistaken in me. 'Ha!' as Voltaire said after expressing a good opinion of Haller, and, on being told that Haller had not expressed a good one of him: 'Perhaps we are both mistaken.' That's a good sarcasm upon my egotism—hey, is it not?"

"A Scotch merchant, a friend of my father's, not one of those for whom he had indorsed, but one who had advised him against his frequent indorsements, and with whom my father quarrelled on that account, with the request that he would mind his own business—this friend, a merchant, took me home with him. He domesticated me in his own family, and after giving me schooling sufficient to render me a good accountant, he placed me as a clerk in his counting room. He had a daughter, Pinckney, two years my elder; a fat, tumid creature, who considered herself a beauty upon the principle of the Chinese, with whom bulk is beauty. She was as vain and envious as she was protuberant, and malignant as Zantippe. I was attentive to her, of course; my duty to my benefactor required that I should be, and I never, I hope, have wanted gallantry. A fellow clerk of mine had a beautiful sister about my age. He and I were intimate, and I frequently visited him at the house of his parents, who were poor, and in the lower walks of life. With his sister, Henrietta, I fell in love, but while the insidious passion crept over me, my worldly interest, like a fiend at my elbow, or like a better prompter, as many would say, was perpetually reminding me of the opportunity of wealth there was in the winning of Mr Churchill's daughter, Miss Clarissa Churchill. The lady, the while, accepted my attentions when there were no other beaux present: she made me her convenience. The old gentleman thought he perceived a growing affection between us, and one day, with the most benevolent and fatherly feelings, he broadly hinted to me that he was pleased to see how matters were going; and that if I continued to please him as I had done, when I became of age he would take me into business with him.

That very night I visited Henrietta—she never looked lovelier. A rival of mine was by her side, and she seemed not indifferent to his attentions; you know the ways of women. I out-sat him; and when he had gone I told my tale of love, and was accepted. I had hardly left the house, with her kisses glowing on my lips, when this worldly fiend I wot of whispered me what a fool I was. On entering Mr Churchill's house there was Miss Clarissa, looking the full consciousness of her powers, and surrounded by a whole bevy of beaux. Success with Henrietta had elated my feelings, given me a strange excitement, and I joined in the conversation with a gaiety and wit, if you will pardon the vanity of the phrase, which was not usual to me. At the same time I did not display that devotion to the lady which at all other times I had been most studious of practising. Here, now, behold the foul inconsistencies of human nature, or rather, not to libel human nature, of my nature. My master this very day had as much as told me that he wished my alliance with his daughter. That alliance, whenever I thought it a matter of impossibility, I looked to as the greatest advancement that could happen.

to me—yet here was I indifferent to the lady, and, to tell the truth, not so much from thinking of the one I had won, as that there was not such a great difficulty after all in winning the other. I am laying bare not the most honourable impulses in the world to you, Pinckney; but I believe I share them with the rest of my species, and thus divide the burden, and lessen the infamy.

" My new manner to the lady piqued her to the core; I saw it instantly, and felt my advantage. She thought me one she could play on and off *ad libitum*; and that she held me as a cat does a harmless mouse, which she could torment to death if it pleased her. She deemed herself a very Hero, and me, a Leander, I suppose, who would have braved the Hellespont, or deeper difficulties, to win her. Oh! the wrath of a woman, and such a woman, when she finds herself at fault in such a calculation.

" For several days she treated me with high-wrought indifference, which I bore with the philosophy of a stoic. Then she relapsed into tenderness, almost tearful tenderness, and by some promptings of the arch enemy I met her half-way. It was her pride that was wounded, not her love, and I had my reward—I never should have acted as I did, had not several debts in which I had involved myself pressed rather heavily on me at this juncture, and reminded me forcibly of the advantages of wealth. When we feel one want heavily, we forget that we may make sacrifices to gratify it, which will eventually give more pain than the relief can possibly afford pleasure.

" Well; I shared my leisure time between Henrietta and Miss Clarissa Chu chill; or rather, I devoted most of my time to the first, and made the apology of urgent business as preventing me from devoting more to the latter.

‘O! what a tangled web we weave,
When first we venture to deceive.’

This state of affairs could not last for ever. Henrietta made her brother, my fellow clerk, her confidant; and one day Mr Churchill paid him the same compliment, and told him that I was addressing his daughter with his approbation and consent. This was a great error of my life, as old Franklin would say. Here was an explosion for you. My fellow clerk, Mr Knight, on the instant, informed Mr Churchill of my engagement with his sister. He asked me—I did not deny the fact; he informed his daughter; she said she scorned me for my base conduct—asserted I had made love to her over and over again, and but in pity, and because it was her father's wish, she had thought of accepting me. I didn't know that I had addressed her. However, it was all right. The old gentleman dismissed me at short warning—I flew to my Henrietta, determined to marry her, and live on love. She let me down the wind by informing me that on hearing of my ‘perfidy,’ she had plighted her faith to my rival. I quarrelled with her brother on the strength of it, and nearly added murder to my other virtues; we fought, and I gave him a desperate wound, and flew for it. He recovered; and while I was a wanderer without a sixpence, my kind Clarissa solaced him for all his suffering by giving my rival her hand—she now is Mrs Knight."

" Mrs Knight—the lady I know!" exclaimed Pinckney.

" The very she. Knight took my place in the counting-room, and in the daughter's heart instanter. A short time afterwards her hand followed her heart. Last of all, to end this strange, eventful history, the father's fortune blest their love. There's a tale of love all round for you, Pinckney, hey—all for love and a little for the lucre."

Pinckney snailed. " Upon my word, Langdale, you are a strange man."

" No, sir; quite a common-place one."

" Knight, I know Knight; why he's a very indifferent fellow."

" Yes, yes; but it is circumstances, Pinckney, that have made him so. He has been vexing upon his father-in-law's fortune—he suffers as much from the twitches of gout as ever I suffered from those of conscience; and either of the ladies is as happy as I believe she would have been had she married your humble servant—and yet we all had our first loves—

— ‘that all
That Eve has left her daughters since her fall.’"

" And what became of Henrietta?" asked Pinckney.

" She is the happy mother of a host of heroes—that are to be," replied Langdale, laughing.

" Go on with your history, Langdale."

"Some other time. I thought I'd give you this by way of my experience. Allow me to say this for myself, though, that afterwards, when Mr Churchill became embarrassed, and I had gained a fortune, I assisted him and saved him from bankruptcy."

"Do you believe not in love?"

"Not in its martyrdom. Henrietta's conduct shows you that she had what the world would call towering pride, and what I would call towering temper. She leads, I am told, her lord a life of it; had I married her, we should have realized the happy habitude of cat and dog, with occasional make-up by way of variety. They would have come through like sunshine in a Lapland winter. As for Clarissa, if I had married her, my life would have been a continual mortification over the flesh and folly of my bride. I like a large woman, observe you, for my taste is Turkish; but give me one who has sweetness of disposition, intellectual cultivation, and ease of manner. I have known such a one; and were I to tell you about her, I could prove to you that a second love may be stronger than the first."

"Let's hear it."

"No, no: some other time."

Pinckney mused in silence, and the conversation took another turn.

CHAPTER XIX.

Now there dwelt in the village of Springdale a certain widow, in whose bosom the storms of life had turned the milk of human kindness sour—if the peculiar temperament of the lady had not soured it at her birth. Mrs Maddox was a starch widow who had a starch daughter, as renowned for her ugliness and ungainliness as was Peggy Blossom for her beauty and grace. This fact had engendered no very kind emotions towards Peggy in the bosoms of the mother and daughter. The feeling was reciprocal; for it cannot be denied that Peggy was wont to toss her head with the airs of a My Lady wherever she encountered Mrs or Miss Maddox.

Mrs Maddox and her daughter were the fashionable milliners of Springdale. Miss Maddox read novels, and was sentimental and spiteful; qualities which she inherited, and which, like an estate entailed in the hands of a careful heir, had not been suffered to run to waste.

"Yes," said Miss Maddox to her mother, on the evening of Bobby's incarceration, as they sat together in the backroom of their shop: it's all that hussey Peggy's fault. She'll come to no good, ma; I know it, and feel it. Only to think how she cuts up with Mr Gordon, Mr Hardy, and Mr Hitt. Hitt's a vulgar person, I know; and I suspect she didn't like him, and put that abominable Bob up to shooting him."

"Vulgar person, Lucinda; that's the very reason that she used to like his visits. He is the most vulgar spoken person I ever knew. But he's but a blacksmith, and you can't expect fur off of a sow's back. I understand it my dear. She was all smiles to Hitt, and the rest of them, until Lawyer Lupton used to go there. She thought he used to go to see her—just like her vanity, when he went to ask her old grandmother concerning a boundary line, as he told me himself—he, he. Yes, she thought she'd catch the lawyer, and so dropped the others; and Mr Lupton, as he told me himself, dropped her. Then she took up with Hitt, and misled the fool into thinking that she liked him, and now it's all for Gordon. This aggravated Hitt, and he spoke her whole character out before the people this evening; and that caused the fuss with Bob Gammon. That child is raising this moment for the gallows. It's so plain to me, that I see him swinging now. It shocks me. How I pity that poor, wretched old woman."

"That Peggy has been ruined by the Holly folks, ma; they have made too much of her. Miss Rachellina gives her her cast-off dresses, and Miss Fanny gives her new ones, and this has put her above herself."

"That reminds me, Lucinda, that Miss Rachellina—such an old thing, to think so much of dressing herself up,—wants to see the new pattern of a cap I got yesterday,—what caps that Peggy makes for her; so I'll put it in a bandbox and call by Mr Bronson's, and take his Tom with me, and go to Holly."

"Do, ma, do; and see what they have to say for Miss Peggy Blossom—what a name—now."

Mrs Maddox accordingly placed the cap in a handbox, put on her bonnet, and departed, saying, "Lucinda, if Mr Lupton comes, show him how beautifully you stitched his collars. I told him this blessed day that they were all your work. Put on your other cape, my dear, and tie it with the pink ribbon—it becomes you most."

Mrs Maddox proceeded directly to Mr Bronson's store; and after telling him that his prophecies about Bobby Gammen had come exactly true, she asked him if he would suffer his boy Tom to attend her to Holly.

The milliner and Mr Bronson, in their respective vocations, were of great service to each other; and consequently very good friends. Her request was therefore politely complied with, and Tom, with the handbox under his arm, was ordered to attend Mrs Maddox.

Holly was but a short distance from Springdale, and Mrs Maddox soon arrived there. She was shown into Miss Rachellina's especial room, where, with the profoundest deference, she exhibited the cap, and expatiated upon its beauties to that good lady.

"Indeed, Miss Rachellina, don't it suit your taste—I hope it will, ma'am," she said, displaying the cap in her hand, and bobbing it about as though it were on her head. "Your taste in caps is quite according to the prints. Miss Blossom too is quite a milliner,—poor thing, indeed she is to be pitied, though it's somewhat her fault, yet misfortunes never come single."

"Her fault—what's the matter," exclaimed Miss Rachellina, somewhat astonished at the volubility of Mrs Maddox, "what's her fault, Mrs Maddox?"

"Haint you heard it, Miss Rachellina."

"Heard it! no, ma'am, I have not heard it—what's her fault, what's she been doing?"

"Then you havn't heard, Miss Rachellina, as what a trouble she's got her poor lame cousin into."

"Trouble! why no, tell me—do tell me?"

Mrs Maddox composed her features into a sympathetic expression ere she said—

"Why, Miss Rachellina, I know that Miss Blossom is a great favourite of yours, and I wouldn't say anything for the world that would hurt the child in your good opinion. She is pretty—very, everybody says that, and they say that your kindness to her and the many presents you give her, gives her looks and ways far above her situation in life."

"No matter what people say, Mrs Maddox; tell me, what has she done?"

"Why ma'am, you must know that folks say that she is a great flirt-coquette; and that she trifles with the feelings of the young men who call to see her with the best intentions."

"What's that to do, Mrs Maddox, with the present business?"

"Why, ma'am, give me time; your indulgence, Miss Rachellina. There be many young men who go to see her, and she, ma'am,—I only say what folks say I don't want to harm her in your good opinion,—but folks say that she has caused somehow or other frequent quarrels amongst them. This I have heard over and over again. Indeed, they do say that she gets sometimes a little above herself. But the long and short of it is this; that Mr Hitt, Joe Hitt, the blacksmith, ma'am, to whom everybody said she was going to be married, he was there last night, and they do say she treated him very badly indeed. She has involved herself with that scamp Gordon. This morning, ma'am, Hitt's feelings were so hurt, and it being election day, he got intoxicated, ma'am, and he being in liquor asked Bobby, what his cousin meant. Bobby took him up, snubbed him on the spot, and told him he had no business to come to the house. At this, as was natural, you know, Miss Rachellina, considering what had passed between Miss Blossom and Mr Hitt, he, Mr Hitt, got angry, and spoke his mind out against Miss Blossom. Bobby all the while had his gun on his shoulder,—a gun Colonel Bentley gave him, ma'am—it was injudicious to give a gun to such a boy, who, everybody says, is disposed to be vicious. Well, ma'am, Mr Hitt could scarcely turn round before the boy fired the whole load into him."

"Terrible!" ejaculated Miss Rachellina; "is he dead?"

"No, ma'am; but dangerous—very dangerous."

"Where was he wounded, where was he wounded?" inquired Miss Rachellina, with intense earnestness.

"Ahem, ahem. Mr Hitt now turned round, when the boy fired, and the load, ma'am, nearly half a peck of buckshot, hit him in the back. Indeed, ma'am, it was the doing of Providence, for if it had have been before it would have ruined him for ever."

At this moment there was a tremulous tap at the door, and on Miss Rachellina saying, "Come in!" Peggy, with a face pale as Mrs Maddox's cap, entered the room.

"Peggy, my child, this is sad things, I hear," said Miss Rachellina, with much sternness. Poor Peggy burst into tears.

Mrs Maddox stood with her cap in her hand, not knowing what to say. "Not now, Mrs Maddox, not now," said Miss Rachellina, turning away from the milliner and her cap, and looking compassionately at Peggy, "my nerves, my sensibilities have been too much tried. You must call again, Mrs Maddox."

The milliner lingered for a moment, with the wish to hear what Peggy should say; but on Miss Rachellina's repeating, "Not now, Mrs Maddox," with a bow that said as plainly as ever did a regal one that the audience was over, she felt compelled to take her departure. As soon as the door had closed on Mrs Maddox, Miss Rachellina seated herself in her high-backed rocking chair, and motioning Peggy to a seat, she crossed her arms in her lap, and said:—

"Peggy Blossom, this is terrible news I hear of your cousin and yourself."

"Of me, Miss Rachellina?"

"Yes, of you, Peggy; I am astonished—shocked beyond measure. My kindness to you was founded upon the opinion that you were a superior young woman. Not superior as to mere appearance—I do not mean personal appearance, that is a very fragile and fleeting quality—but superior in disposition, in conduct, in that which constitutes the chief charm of the female character. I am surprised to hear, Peggy, that you are given to flirtation and coquetry (here Peggy's astonishment subsided into a sheepish expression), and in this way—a very common way, Peggy Blossom, you have caused perhaps the death of two persons."

"It can't be, Miss Rachellina," said Peggy; "for they say Joe Hitt is not hurt badly; and if he is not, how can they harm Bobby? Besides, if he was, he threw at Bobby, a poor lame boy as he is, three or four times, and once like to have knocked him down, before Bobby fired."

"Well, child," resumed Miss Rachellina, "you have relieved my mind from an oppressive load, if such is the fact; I rejoice to hear it. Peggy, Peggy, let this be a lesson to you, let what may be the event. I am told, much to my surprise and grief, that you suffer that young man Gordon, whose character is, to say the best of it, on a very doubtful footing, to visit you on familiar terms. Peggy, let me caution you, do not at all encourage that man. I am told it is notorious that you prefer his company and conversation to that of any other young man in the village."

Here Sidney Fitzhurst entered his aunt's room, and that lady, ere she turned to him, said to the girl, "I hope I have said enough to you, Peggy;" and then, addressing her nephew, asked: "What news do you bring, Sidney? you are late; can you tell me of Robert Gammon's unfortunate case?"

"Yes, aunt; I am fresh from the village, and can tell you all about it; I have just had the honour of becoming Mr Robert Gammon's bail; the poor fellow was in a peck of troubles."

"Bail! what's that, Mr Fitzhurst, if you please, sir?" asked Peggy.

"Why, Peggy, I have become his security for his appearance at court—for his future good behaviour, and they have let him out of jail on that condition. So you must tell Bobby, that if he does not behave himself I shall have ten times as much money to pay for him as he has lost."

"I will sir! is he out, sir? has he gone home?"

"He has, Peggy."

"Then good night, Mr Fitzhurst; good night, Miss Rachellina," said Peggy, as she hastened to the door.

"Good night, Peggy," replied Miss Rachellina. "Remember, child," she continued, impressively raising her finger, "what I have said to you."

With a downcast head Peggy closed the door, and hastened out of the house. Without stopping to speak to any one she took her solitary way home.

"If I were to meet Jack Gordon," thought Peggy, as she drew near grandmother's, "I'd be bound I'd tell him a piece of my mind. I always had a misgiving, just like one of granny's dreams, that he would bring trouble on me."

The adage, which says talk of a certain person and he appears, was not verified in this instance, perhaps it might have been because Peggy was only thinking. She entered the house without meeting any one, and beheld Bobby giving an account of the day's adventure to his grandmother.

CHAPTER XX.

PINCKNEY, in the city, under the constant attendance of the best medical aid which it afforded, recovered rapidly.

"Langdale," he said to his friend one day, "I have arranged my business by letter, and I shall be in no haste to leave your city."

"I rejoice at it," replied Langdale, "and, Pinckney, I have certain suspicions that there are attractions for you here, which the north, with all its allurements of home, cannot offer you. Do you know that you talk in your sleep? and that one night when I watched with you I made discoveries?"

"Ah! of what character were they? If you had been laid up about the time of Miss Henrietta's cruelties, some watching friend might also have made discoveries in your case."

"Do you believe in second love?"

"Suppose I subscribe myself your convert, what then?"

"I should say that you were rapidly recovering—that the sound state of your mind was a prognostic of the sound state of your body. Second love, Pinckney, upon the heart, is like the moonlight upon Rome, as your favourite bard has described it.

'Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
-nd making that which was not.'

"Ah, Langdale," replied Pinckney, "your quotation is poetical, but not true; remember that the bard says the moonlight

—'softened down the hoar austerity
Of rugged desolation.'

"Certainly," rejoined Langdale, interrupting Pinckney.

—'and filled up,
As 'twere anew, the gap of 'centuries.'

"That's the idea, my dear Pinckney; all these 'gaps' in the heart on the first love will be 'filled up, as 'twere anew,' by the second passion. There's poor Burns, who, though peasant-born, had such a capacious heart for true sentiment—whose songs upon love are the best and truest that were ever written—he fell in love with fifty different women."

"Yes; but do you not believe that his love for highland Mary—the girl who died, and to whom he addressed those touching lines to 'Mary in Heaven'—do you not believe that his love for her was the strongest passion of his heart?"

"He might have thought so; she died after their loves were plighted, and so strongly plighted, over the running stream on the Bible, as they were parting. Nothing occurred—no jealousy or suspicion between them to make one doubt the other. When those lines were written she was in her grave, with associations of youthful tenderness around her, close as her shroud—hallowed, not buried by its folds.

The love where death has set his seal
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow."

"But, remember, all first loves have not such hallowed remembrances, and all lines to Mary are not so—Mary in Heaven."

Pinckney laughed. "True as the book," he said; "I'll tell you, Langdale, and it is strange, as we are men of such different views of life, that I should wish to tell you. But, 'mid the chief beauties of almighty Rome' on such a night as the bard has described, I made the acquaintance of a lady who has considerably influenced my destinies, at least the destinies of my heart, for some time. Though descended from American parents, she was an Italian. She had that style of beauty—the dark hair and eye, and the voluptuous grace; but I won't weary you with a description of loveliness that I thought equal to anything that sculptor or artist of that fairy land had ever fancied; you would laugh at me. She was some one or two years my elder, and knew the world. I have since discovered this, like one on whom had

been particularly conferred its master-key. I left home for foreign travel full of deep-wrought sentiment and romance. After some rough trials I had received, by the death of a dear relative, a very large fortune, and, like the overtasked labourer when the day of feasting comes, I plunged too deeply into pleasure, forgetful of the high hopes to which before I had been sacrificing my health. Pleasure did quickly what study was slowly doing. My energies were prostrated. I wanted an object in life, and I determined on travel, as I have said. To Italy I looked as the land on which the Promethean fire descended. There I promised myself all that the prospects of the beautiful which one of our own country's best bards has painted as well as ever yet did poet paint them. Did you know my namesake, Edward C. Pinkney, of Baltimore, the poet?"

"No: I have often heard of him; was he a relation of yours?"

"No, not relations; he spells his name without the c; he was a son of the celebrated lawyer. I knew him slightly. He was one of the handsomest men I have ever seen. He was older than I—I met him some years ago when I was in my teens, in New York. He presented me with a copy of his poems. They are exceedingly beautiful—gems all. That serenade of his, 'Look out upon the stars, my love,' is the best in the language. It puts one in mind of the two or three fragments we have of Lovelace, the chevalier poet of the olden time, who wrote so touchingly to his mistress from prison:

'Look out upon the stars, my love!
And shame them with your eyes,
On which—thou or the lights above,
There hangs more destinies.'

"How beautiful, hey?—again:

'Sleep not, thine image wakes for aye
Within my watching breast,
Sleep not, from her soft sleep should fly,
Who robs all hearts of rest.'

"There is the spirit of the loves of the knights of old in that; and then his piece called 'The Health.' I made his poems my companion. I have been wandering. I introduced his name to say, that I looked upon Italy as he has described it in a short poem bearing that title. Pardon me if I quote a stanza or two.

'It looks a dimple on the face of earth,
The seal of beauty, and the shrine of mirth;
Nature is delicate, and graceful there,
The place of genius, feminine, and fair;
The winds are awed, nor dare to breathe aloud,
The air seems never to have borne a cloud
Save where volcanoes send to heaven their curled
And solemn smoke, like altars of the world.
Thrice beautiful to that delightful spot
Carry our married hearts, and be all pain forgot.'

There art, too, shows, when nature's beauty palls
Her sculptured marbles, and her pictured walls;
And there are forms in which they both conspire
To whisper themes that knows not how to tire;
The speaking rains in that gentle clime,
Have but been hallowed by the foot of time,
And each can mutually prompt some thought of flame,
The meanest stone is not without a name.
Then come, beloved! hasten o'er the sea,
To build our happy hearth in blooming Italy.'

"There, is not that most beautiful; surpass that description from any poet!"

"What became of Mr Pinkney?"

"He died some years ago. A thousand times have I beneath Italian skies repeated those lines. I could not woo a beloved one to go with me to 'blooming Italy,' but I thought I had found one there who would win me to stay. I had no premonitory symptoms. I took the disease at first sight; perhaps it was owing to the climate."

"Ah, you're getting cured," said Langdale, laughing, "inasmuch as you can jest with the wounds, they will eventually heal over without a scar. Nothing turns the arrow of the blind god aside like a jest, after all. But, go on; go on."

"Her parents being from America—she claiming to be an American woman, though born in Italy; and speaking the mutual language when I could not speak Italian—all this, had she not been so beautiful, would have thrown me into her society. As it was, every hour that I possibly could, I devoted to her. Her mind, naturally strong and highly cultivated; her

manners, though I have thought since they possessed no little mannerism and display, were winning beyond resistance, and her form was such as Pinkney, my namesake, speaks of in the last stanzas which I repeated to you. I used frequently to tell her so. I was a year under her spell. What's the purpose of dwelling upon what a fool I was; I might have done so then, but a light has broke in upon me since, enough to give me an inkling of what a Billy Lackaday I was."

Langdale laughed heartily.

"Confound you," said Pinkney, "your comical laugh won't let me be sentimental. What a fool I was to pretend to talk to you on such a subject."

"Indeed you were not—believe me, I think you'll remove the image by-and-bye. The best way to prevent its return, remember, is to put another in its place—but go on."

"Some other time, Langdale; your laugh has scattered all my sentimental reminiscences, I could give you but a history of my feelings; but to probe them—they are a little sore yet, maybe."

"You're convalescing. But, believe me, I laughed in reflecting upon myself, not at you. I think our characters are alike in many points, but there is a great difference between them, and in that difference consists what would make you happy, I believe, as a married man. That is, provided you did not marry your Italian love."

"That's a strange remark."

"Not at all; it is a just one. That fair lady of 'blooming Italy,' I plainly discover, even from what little you have said, was a splendid—an accomplished—woman of the world. And from all such deliver me. She would have spent your fortune—not cared to have any hold upon your affections, except as she could hold some purse, and would have worried you to death with her whines and waywardness—kept all her amiability for company, and all her fault-finding for your private ear. Such a woman is worse, Pinkney, in my opinion, than those of her sex who, in the world's opinion, are deemed the most worthless."

Pinkney coloured deeply at this remark. 'Tis strange when one man of the world meets with another profounder in its knowledge than himself, how almost child-like he will frequently become when with him. His elder's knowledge and experience place him in the predicament of the schoolboy, who not only feels that his teacher is his superior in knowledge, but that he thoroughly understands and penetrates the feelings of his pupils. Pinkney's confinement, however, and debility, which affected his nerves, assisted much in producing at the time a state of feeling, which at another he would not have believed was natural to him under any circumstances.

"Understand me," said Langdale, quickly observing Pinkney's emotion; "let not your feelings be aroused for the lady. I mean to speak of your class of worldly women. And maybe she is not of that character—is without the rule if she is. She may furnish one of those exceptions that logicians tell us make general rules stronger."

Pinkney remained silent, but he smiled archly, and Langdale continued:

"I'm held to be a man of the world—but as the world goes, I flatter myself I am not so much so as the world thinks—not so much so as the generality of its good people."

"You are proverbially so," said Pinkney.

"Well, then, perhaps I am so heartless myself, that I want a person all heart, as a friend or mistress, to make up the deficiency on my part. We love our opposites, you know—I must confess that I have what is called a liking for a man of the world—one who has travelled and knows a thing or two, and is withal a gentleman. I have, I say, for such a man a liking, and for such a woman, an admiration—and that's all. If I have not the domestic ties about my hearth I have their appreciation about my heart the stronger—you start?"

"Start! only think of the history of your first love which you gave me."

"True, think of it; the antagonist principles were then fighting in me, which plainly prove I was not a worldly man. Had I been such, I should certainly have married Clarissa Churchill; as it was, I never even courted her, but went in for love. It is true I may have wavered for an instant, but never when brought to the point. The vast majority of young men would not have wavered for a moment. They would have fawned, the sycophants of Clarissa, and never once have thought of Henrietta but as a 'poor girl,' which, from being repeated by them in a depreciating tone, would soon in their minds have taken its broadest

signification, and they would have got to denouncing her as a 'poor girl in every sense of the word.'

" You are too harsh, Langdale, in your opinion of the world ; I don't esteem men so mercenary. I believe that most young people would make any sacrifice to their affections."

" Most of them will tell you so ; but I believe in original sin in that respect if in no other. Selfishness is inborn in us ; it is as strong in the young man as in the old one ; but it has different ways of developing itself in them, because their aims are different. No really great scoundrel ever made a confession of his rascality except on his death-bed or under the gallows, and then he was for being heroic and dying game. I never knew a man yet who frankly confessed his vices who had not many virtues. And I never knew a man who made proclamation that he had all the virtues, whose vices did not greatly out-number them. The man who knows himself a thorough-paced scoundrel, does all he can to hide the least delinquency, because he fears, if one is discovered it will furnish a clue to his whole character. The tendency of these remarks might seem to eulogize a character like my own, perhaps ; but I make them because I know they are true. I lay my life, this bird of the Italian skies, and who was just suited for its glories, and pined if met them—I lay my life she spoke much more plainly to you about love, and made much freer acknowledgment of her passion, voluntarily, perchance, than you could ever wring from Fanny Fitzhurst, though you had courted her, and she had accepted you. What we feel deeply we treasure deeply. Lip service is easily uttered. And when we are profoundly good or bad we never tell it ; the first from modesty, the second from interest ; but when we would be what we are not, the lips very easily play their part ; 'tis our actions that betray us. Suppose two streams to be endowed with language, the shallow one would no doubt make its ripples tattle to you of its depth, while the deep one would roll upon its waveless course, satisfied that it was deep, and wait for the testing if it was doubted."

" What, pray tell me, put Miss Fitzhurst in your thoughts by way of illustration ?"

" What caused you to ask me the question ? Pinckney, the condition of a man, as described by Shakspeare, 'between the acting of a heedful thing and the first motion,' is pretty much like the struggle between first and second love. Not that the contest has any ferocity in it :—

' But the state of man
Like to a little kingdom, suffer then
The nature of an insurrection.' "

" No," said Pinckney smiling, " your illustration to me is not a good one. My notion is, that between the first and second love there is an intervention of a blank, an unanticipated blank ; darkness, like the night between two days—that one gradually fades off like a summer sunset, leaving the highest hopes last, like the highest hills ; and that the other rises out of deepest darkness, long after the past day has gone to the years beyond the flood. There is no passing from the one to the other without a long interval of calm, like night between."

" You won't admit any thunder-storm through the night, then," interrupted Langdale, " engendered by the heat of the previous day."

" Oh, yes ; perhaps a little through the night to make pure the atmosphere for the second love ; but if there be any through the day, I claim it as a proof of what my favourite said—

' The day drags on though storm keep out the sun,
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on.' "

C H A P T E R XXI.

After Pinckney had been some weeks the guest of his friend Langdale, one day, when the inmates of Holly were assembled round their social hearth, for it was now generally cold enough for fires, though on some days they were not necessary, the following conversation occurred :

" Well, brother, how is Mr Pinckney ?" asked Fanny.

" He is better," replied Sidney, " though he has not been out but once since the day he did us the honour to dine with us in town."

"That was a most imprudent step," said Rachellina. "I have never thought of it since without being provoked with you. To invite a gentleman so much injured as Mr Pinckney to a house so damp and unaired as I know our town house must be, was the height of imprudence."

"My dear aunt, I can assure you," rejoined Fanny, "that fires were made in the rooms early, and everything was comfortable. Mr Pinckney, in proof of it, received no injury whatever—not the slightest."

"I wished Fanny to go with me to our friend Langdale's and see him, but she foolishly refused," said Sidney.

"Foolishly! I think not, nephew. If it had been necessary for Fanny to go, it would have been from the necessity proper, not otherwise."

"Why, aunt," replied Pinckney, "did not all the ladies on Mr Langdale's birthday attend a splendid party there?"

"Yes, nephew; but remember, one of the first ladies of our city, Mrs Allan, did the honours for him."

"Aunt," said Sidney, archly, "you have called repeatedly to see Pinckney."

"There is a difference, Sidney," replied Miss Rachellina, bridling. "between the age and situation of myself and niece."

"Sidney bowed low to his aunt, and then said to his sister, as if he were determined to tease somebody.

"I believe Fanny meant to have gone, until she heard that Pinckney was able to go out, and then she proposed that I should invite him to the house."

"There was some manœuvring in that, I confess," said Fanny, blushing, but rallying, "and brother, it's in our family. At least you and I have the gift, for you have practised considerable diplomacy in finding excuses for visiting Mr Elwood's lately."

Sidney looked at his sister and, unobserved by his aunt and father, shook his head.

"Niece," said Miss Rachellina with a decided air, "I have heard you rally your brother repeatedly lately on the frequency of his visits to Mr Elwood's. But there are some things that should not be jested on—I beg you will drop it. Miss Sarah Grattan is a very fine girl, considering her advantages. A very fine girl; but the possibility of her alliance with our family is not to be even remotely hinted at. This familiar jesting upon certain subjects takes off imperceptibly their impropriety in our minds. Your brother's visits to Mr Elwood's have no such character as your jests would imply; yet by your raillery upon the subject, the impression may be made upon the servants and upon the neighbours, which would compel us to treat Miss Grattan coldly,—a thing I should be very sorry to do."

"That is what I don't think I shall ever do under any circumstances, my dear aunt, for she is the very best girl I ever knew; and, indeed, she has a great deal of mind. As for brother, aunt, they say in town, you know, that he is courting Jane Moreland."

"A very fine young lady is Miss Moreland; her family is one of the best in the state, and her fortune is ample."

"Who told you that, sis?" asked Sidney.

"Oh! how very ignorant you are, brother of mine," rejoined Fanny. "Mrs Allan asked me if it were true the last time I was in town, and so did the Swifts."

Mr Paul Fitzhurst was seated in his arm-chair, apparently reading the newspaper and inattentive to the conversation. A frown succeeded Fanny's remark, when the old gentleman laid the newspaper on his knee, and said—

"There has always been something mysterious about the intimacy existing between Mr Elwood and Bronson, who, some one told me, was to marry Miss Grattan. I wonder at her choice. Miss Grattan's father was a highly respectable man; he was a physician in extensive practice, and a fine companion he was, too. I knew him well. He married a very respectable girl, a Miss Gilmore, I think, of an old but reduced family. Elwood bore in those days a very bad character; he was held to be a low, dissipated gambler; and it was a matter of surprise to every one when the other Miss Gilmore ran away with him. He and Bronson were always intimate; I remember then that both of them were held in little repute. Elwood, however, I have always thought a much better man than Bronson."

"I think not, brother," interrupted Miss Rachellina; "he treated his wife shockingly."

in respect to her family, used to visit her occasionally, and I protest that the brutality of her husband shocked me. I gave him a setting down once that he remembers to this day. Bronson, though, is a low creature—and now I remember, brother, notwithstanding Bronson always pretended to be pious, there was a great intimacy between them. It was said at the time that Bronson had done him some favour—relieved him from a debt that threatened to deprive him of his farm; that's the only thing he cares for. I have often repented since, that when his niece was growing up, I did not show her some kindness; but I attended Mrs Elwood's funeral; and, notwithstanding the awful occasion, Elwood remembered the setting down I gave him, and treated me rudely. This prevented my taking the interest in Miss Sarah that I else would have done."

"Aunt, old Agnes, who lives in the old cabin by the burnt mill, is a very intelligent old woman. I have heard her say she knew all about the Grattans; she's very old—yes, very; she remembers all about your grandfather, and can tell about the revolutionary war. I don't like her."

"She was Dr Grattan's mother's housekeeper," said Fanny, "and she is so full of old romantic notions that I like to go and talk with her. Why, aunt, she expresses herself as well as any lady—all the village people pay her a great deal of respect. She tells fortunes, and believes in true love."

"True love!" interrupted Miss Rachellina; "Fanny, you said that just as I supposed that giddy thing, Peggy Gammon, would have spoken it."

"Well, aunt, over such as Peggy, and over the village girls, she has great influence—it is believed that she is a fortune-teller—I like to listen to her; she certainly is interesting."

"It is such fortune-telling old women as she," exclaimed Miss Rachellina, "who have ruined the happiness of many a poor girl. Such a worthless fellow as this John Gordon, for instance, will pay her well, and then persuade a giddy thing like Peggy Gammon to go and have her fortune told. The result is that the worthless hag describes him as her 'true lover,' as you or she would call it, and when he offers himself she considers it destiny, and takes him."

"It is recorded of Sam Foote, the celebrated wit," said Sidney, "that he, by turning fortune-teller for a friend of his, Lord Debar—if I remember rightly—got five thousand pounds—at any rate, a very large sum. The lady was superstitious, my lord knew it, and told Foote, who was a great mimic, and could assume any disguise, that if he would play the fortune-teller, and describe him exactly to the lady as her future husband, and the stratagem succeeded, he would pay him that sum. Foote agreed. The lady sought to know her fate, and he told it. My lord courted and won her with her fortune, and paid Foote out of it. So, take care, Fanny, how you consult the oracle; some mercenary gentleman may anticipate your questions, and purchase the response."

"I shall be beforehand with the gentleman, brother; for the first one that I fall in love with I will get you to invite to Holly; then I will apprise aunt Agnes of the fact, describe him to her, see her well, tell my gentleman of her skill in palmistry, and when he reparts to the oracle I shall be described to him to a T, as the only one who can make him happy."

"If you have such designs, sis, I advise you by all means to cultivate the good graces of aunt Agnes."

"I have done so, sir. Almost every fine day when I visit Sarah, we call over by the mill to see her, when I never fail to give her something; besides which, I have dispatched Pompey repeatedly to her cabin with flour, butter, eggs, ham, and many other things; for aunt Agnes, though she be a witch, lives not upon air, and therefore are my purposes in the full promise of accomplishment. You may further know, sir, that I intend to spend to-morrow with Sarah, and that we will certainly call and see, not the White Lady of Avenel, but the White Lady of the Woods. So, if you promise to come to me in the afternoon, I promise to intercede and make your future fate bright."

"Agreed!" said Sidney, "it is a bargain."

CHAPTER XXII.

The burnt mill of which we have spoken stood at the foot of the hills, at the termination of a road, which was called the Mill-road, but which, since the fire, had not been used except by Mr Fitzhurst and Elwood for farming purposes, or by such wayfarers and rovers as Gordon and his companions whom Bobby overheard the night of the husking match.

The mill was of rude stone construction, and nothing was left but its bare and blackened walls. The scenery about it was picturesque. A stream called the Falls dashed down by it, with its full supply of water, for the mill-dam was broken down and the mill-race choked up by deposits from its sides, made by various rains, and overgrown with reeds.

About twenty feet above the mill, towards what was once the dam, stood an old log-cabin, formerly occupied by an assistant of the miller, who attended to keeping the dam and race in repair. After the fire he left his humble dwelling, and old Agnes took possession of it.

Agnes had been housekeeper to Doctor Grattan's mother, and her attachment to his daughter was so great, that at Mr Elwood's request she removed to his house when he took the child home, and nursed her with parental care. Had it not been for her attachment to Sarah, Agnes would not have stayed a day at Mr Elwood's. He treated her, it is true, better than any other person about his farm, but then she was a white woman, and she was very kind to her little charge. This did not, however, prevent Mr Elwood from using towards her, when in his cups the roughest language. His unkindness to Agnes as Sarah grew up, and her nurse became more helpless, increased; and one day, on his telling her that she did nothing, and that she must be off, she removed to the miller's cabin.

The Falls, the descent of which was very rapid opposite the cabin, dashed on wildly over projecting rocks, throwing its silver spray against their faces, and forming in their bottoms many fantastic eddies and pools, in which the leaves and pieces of bark and wood floated round and round, as they were borne onward. Above these rocks the stream lay comparatively quiet and lake-like; and jutting prominences, covered almost entirely by moss and wild vines, gave beauty to the view, which, on the right, as you looked up the stream, stretched out into the valley, and on the left was bounded by a bold chain of hills.

There had been an inclosure around the cabin, but it was broken down before Agnes domesticated herself there; and the wild honeysuckle and the wild sweet brier grew almost up to the very door. A single tall oak stretched its branches above and over the cabin, which had the appearance of leaning against it, as if for support: the ruins of the mill below towered over the cabin in aristocratic solemnity; its blackened walls, relieved to the eye here and there by the "parasite" plant, the ivy, which, unlike parasites in general, was giving beauty to what all the rest of the vegetable kingdom shrank from; but in this it was justifying the simile of the poet, who, in comparing woman to it, said that—

"Like ivy, she's known to cling
Too often round a worthless thing."

A worthless thing to whom she has sacrificed everything, and whose worthlessness and vice, in the abundance of her love, she is endeavouring to hide.

A path from the cabin led to a garden spot by the mill, which had been formerly cultivated by the miller, and which was roughly inclosed by what in that country is called a Virginia fence. It was formed by laying a number of rails in zigzag manner on each other. By the corners of the fence, on the outer side, blackberry bushes and wild roses grew in abundance. Agnes continued, with the assistance of some of her neighbours, to keep the little inclosure free from weeds, and to raise within vegetables sufficient to supply her frugal wants. She also cultivated a quantity of herbs, which were thought to possess greater medicinal virtues when administered by her than similar simples purchased from the apothecary.

The morning after the badinage between Fanny and her brother, she visited Sarah Grattan according to her promise. Her friend was delighted to see her, and in much better spirits than usual. Though the autumn was now far advanced, the day proved a delightful

one—one of those sunny remembrances of summer, and Fanny proposed that they should make a visit to aunty Agnes.

Sarah readily assented; and, unattended, they proceeded together, following a sheep-path through the woods to the old woman's cabin.

On rapping at the door, the voice of old Agnes bade them enter. They did so, and found the old woman engaged at her spinning-wheel by the hearth, in which a slight fire, which she fed from a quantity of brushwood that lay in the corner, crackled and sparkled. Agnes was dressed in a homespun frock, with a plain, but clean cotton cap on her head. Though very old, she was hale and hearty. Her countenance expressed cheerfulness, but with an air of character, and decision. When young, she must have been handsome, for though her skin was wrinkled, it was evident that it had been fair; her nose was straight, and her eye blue and bright. Her forehead had fewer wrinkles than one might have supposed, and her hair, silvered with years, was gathered neatly under her cap.

The furniture of her humble room—the cabin had but one—consisted of a small table, a pair of old drawers, four old chairs, and a bed. A shelf beside the chimney contained a few plates and tea-cups, with an old-fashioned tea-pot which had belonged to Sarah's grandmother. Under the shelf was a tea-kettle, with two or three articles for cooking. Different kinds of herbs, together with strings of dried fruit, were hung by nails to the wall, as were also two or three bundles of wool.

"Come in, dears," said aunt Agnes, with a delighted smile; "it makes my old eyes glad to see you, you look so young and blithesome. Did you see anything of my little dog, Benny, as you came along?"

"No, nurse; has he left you?" said Sarah.

"Me, child; but I've missed him all this noon. He followed me out to my garden; my cat seemed ailing, and I went there to get some catnip for her with the dew-freck on it; she didn't seem to like the dried I gave her; I suspect it had lost its qualities. A merciful man is merciful to his beast, you know, dears, and these dumb things are a great comfort to me. I wonder how Mrs. Gammon's rheumatism is? That grandchild of hers, Bobby, they tell, is out of his trouble."

"Yes, aunty," replied Fanny, "he is; he was up at the house yesterday."

"To be sure the old woman's health is bad, and when that's bad, nothing appears bright to us; but I think she ought to bear it better; I don't think there is any evil in the boy."

"He's a little mischievous," said Fanny, "but we all like him; he is now going to school in the village."

"I hope he'll be a comfort to the old woman yet, if she lives," said Agnes. "Come, dears, it's such a bright day, now I've got your company, I'll walk up the little path, and look at the waters and the woods. They're gladsome to old eyes: the nearer we grow to the time when we must leave nature, the more we like to look upon her face when it is smiling. It gladdens an old heart, and makes it feel young again. This, so far, has been a cheerful autumn; we've not had many dark days yet; I think it will be a mild winter. It will be a blessing for the poor, particularly for those in the cities, if it is; I'm hale and hearty for one of my years, but I can't expect, in the nature of things, to see many more winters."

"Nurse, you walk very firm yet," said Sarah, as she assisted the old woman to make a step from her door, and fixed the hood of an old-fashioned cloak upon her head.

"Oh! yes, dear, I can walk miles yet; but I'm ninety-three, come next spring."

With a very light step for one of her years, Agnes walked between the girls, conversing in a similar strain to that which we have recorded. They proceeded up the Falls to where, the waters lay lake-like, as we have described, and seated themselves under an aged elm, near a clump of willows.

"How beautiful this is," said Sarah.

"Yes, dears, I've always liked it. The waters glide along so quietly here, that they remind me of my life. Heaven send that it shall not be so wild and rough in its fall. See the hills there; how bold and proud they look, like a haughty man upon a humble one; but up the valley it appears so quiet and calm, and there's something solemn, solemn,—death-reminding in the turn and fall of the leaf. It comes like a warning to be prepared."

"Aunty, you never go to church now-a-days. If you can't walk, I'll send and have you taken," said Sarah.

"Thank you, child; thank you—no; our good minister often comes to see me, and the variety of new faces and the changes of things take my thoughts away—make them wander at church. This is the very spot, as I told you, where a young girl—I knew her well when we were young together—this is the very spot, they say, where she drowned herself. Lean over, dears, but mind you don't fall," continued Agnes, stretching out her hands as if to hold the girls as they arose and looked over; "see, it's a deep distance down, and the water is so quiet there that you can see your own sweet faces in it. It is said that ever since the poor thing drowned herself, the waves grew calmer and calmer. 'Tis true they used to be rough here, and the old miller, who was a hard-hearted man, used to say it was because there was a rock just above this that made the stream break this way, and that it had been rolled down by the force of the falls in a terrible storm to the rocks below; but the superstitious old folks about maintain, that the spirit of the poor girl hovered over the place where she leaped in, and made the waters calm."

"Oh! I've heard something about it," said Fanny, musingly, turning to Sarah; "the poor girl who imitated Sappho, without knowing there was such a person, but who felt all that Sappho has expressed."

"A character, Sarah, for whom somehow or other I never could feel much sympathy; I suppose this suicide first started the idea that the mill was haunted."

"No, dear," replied Agnes, "they had not the idea that the mill was haunted then. It was always said that her spirit hovered about this spot; but it was never called an evil spirit. For my part, I am over-persuaded, at least I have got the idea since I have been living so much alone, that there are such things as good spirits and evil spirits; but I believe the worst of them are harmless to good people, though they may tempt them."

"I thought Jane Lovell, as you told me, nurse," said Sarah, "was the daughter of the miller. Was he the hard-hearted man who, you say, asserted that the water became quiet here because the rock was removed?"

"No, child, no; he was the one who took the mill after Mr Lovell, who built it. You must know, after his only child drowned herself, that he and his wife, as was natural, couldn't bear to stay, so they left. The mill and his house, then, were the only places between this and the village, except, dear, you place," said Agnes, addressing Fanny. "I think, dear, that the property was leased from you people, and after the mill was burnt down, it being not worth the rent, it went back to them. It was the old miller, a rank tory, who got the mill from Lovell, that used to have folks say it was haunted. They do say it was haunted by flesh and blood, by some of the tories that he gave meal to in the night-time, when they would steal through the hills here from where the British lay at."

"What was this story, aunty, about Jane Lovell? do tell it to me."

"Didn't I tell it to you, children, together, one day?"

"No, nurse," replied Sarah, "it was only to me; tell it again, tell it again: I love to hear it, though it always makes me sad."

"That's natural, dear, and bless your heart; I, that have nursed you, know that you feel for such poor things. Then, dears, sit one on each side of me. Mrs Gammon, you tell me, is better; I am glad to hear it; health is like a quiet conscience, we can't be happy without it, but one we may lose, and it may not be our fault. Yes, I was young as you are, dears, when I first knew Jane Lovell. It was thought that the British would take the city, as they lay just below it, and the country round was full of tories. So your grandfather, Sarah, who was a good and true soldier in the continental cause, sent your mother to Springdale, which was pretty much such a place then as it is now, and I attended her. Some of the old villages, dears, wear the same face they used to wear, when everything else is so changed that, when amidst present scenes, you look back and try to recollect former ones, it seems impossible, as scarcely a vestige of them remains to assist your memory. But Springdale is much the same. I was young then, blithe of heart, and blithe of limb, knowing no sorrow or trouble; the world all seemed cheerful to me; but I lost all that was left to me in that war before it.

were, over—two brothers and a father. It comes like a pride to my old heart, though that they died in a rightful cause, if ever fight was rightful.

"Your family then, dear (to Sarah), were among the richest in the land, and your grandmother did all she could to comfort me; and well she might, for your grandfather was a soldier, and commanded the very company that my father was killed in. It seems strange that the troubles of other people should lessen our own; but so it is, for when I came to think of poor Jane Lovell for some time after, I felt it was sinful to grieve so much. Poor thing! how she must have grieved; it was a complete heart-break and despair. I am old now, dears, but I have been young, and I can feel for a poor young thing, and I believe that, to forsake one that loves you, and whom you have won to love you, is a sin that's set down among the direst and the deepest. I believe it, and I always have believed it."

"I knew Jane, as I tell you. She was the merriest, truest-hearted girl in the neighbourhood; and she and I grew as intimate as you two; for I spent with your mother nearly a year in the village.

"One day the militia had a skirmish with a number of tories who haunted the hills, and who could prowl about in the night and rob and steal, and be off on the swiftest horses. The tories were led by a British officer, and they got the worst of it, and fled like cowards as they were, and left him wounded up the Falls, they say not two miles from here. He was hurt badly: so the militia, by the command of their officer, made a litter out of some poles that they cut in the wood, together with coats enough, which they took off their backs for the purpose, and brought him towards the village. He was so exhausted by the time they got to the mill that it was thought he would die, so they carried him into Mr Lovell's, and hastened off for a doctor.

"I remember that very day well; for in the afternoon Jane came to the village and told me about it, and she said what a handsome man the officer was, and that she must hurry home, for he might need a poultice or something else that she might make."

"What kind of a looking girl, aunty, was Jane?" inquired Fanny.

"One that was pleasing to look upon! she was thought as pretty then over all the young girls of the place as is Peggy Gammon now. That child reminds me of her—only Jane was not so lively, and was more diffident; besides, she had a good education. It made me happy to look upon her; nobody envied her, everybody loved her."

Here Fanny drew nearer to aunt Agnes, and asked her to go on, while Sarah, who had often heard the story, arose from the side of the old woman, and often gazing over the bank for a moment with a kind of mental fascination, resumed her seat with renewed interest.

"Well, it was a long time before the officer, who was named Maynard, Lieutenant Maynard, recovered even so that he could go out; and all the while Jane's visits to the village grew fewer and fewer. When she did come she was always talking of the officer. After he got so as he could go about, he was put upon his parole, but he continued to board at the mill, saying that he liked the situation better than the village. Mr Lovell and his wife liked him very much, and were glad of his staying; they were unsuspecting people.

"Well, then, he stayed: and folks who went to the mill used to observe that Jane cared nothing for company, and that she was always sitting in the room with the officer, who would be found reading or talking to her. On this very spot they would sit together for hours."

"When Lieutenant Maynard recovered, he was still upon his parole, and he frequently came to Springdale. Everybody liked him; there he was thought to be a fine, amiable young man. He used to call and see your grandmother, child (to Sarah), and she thought the world of him. Jane, too, whenever she came to Springdale, would call and see me, and her perpetual talk was, as I have told you, about Mr Maynard. Poor thing! I hear her now; with what a fluttering heart she would talk and talk, and of nothing but him."

"Was he handsome?" inquired Fanny.

"Yes, dear, as handsome as you find in a thousand. So, one day I taxed her with being in love with him. She was confused, but she laughed, and asked why not. I spoke my mind to her. I told her that I did not think he was in love with her, and that if he was, did she expect to marry him and to go to England among his high relations? Such a shade came over her face! but she said no more, and I felt for her, and changed the subject. Still Mr Maynard remained at the mill; but Jane, when I saw her after this, did not speak so much of him, and

she was not so lively ; or rather sometimes she was more lively, and then she would get soft suddenly, and leave me.

Unexpectedly one day the news came that prisoners were to be exchanged. Mr Maynard walked over from the mill to the village ; and without taking leave of anybody, he left under the escort of the guard who were to see him safe to the British lines. This was about noon. As it grew towards night, Jane came to Springdale to your grandmother's house, and asked to see me. I didn't know her at first, she looked so corpse-like, and her voice sounded as though it came from the grave. She talked upon indifferent things for while, but it was too plain that something was on her mind. I asked her what was the matter ? she affected to be in a joke, and said that Mr Maynard had bid them good-bye at the mill, but that she wondered if he had gone, and wouldn't I just step over to the tavern for her and ask, that her mother wanted to know. I told her that he had gone, for that I myself had seen him depart under the escort. She said no more ; for some time she seemed bewildered. Then she asked me if I did not think he would come back. I told her I thought not ; when I said this, she got up and said good-bye, and after she had passed out of the door she returned, and said :

“ Come Agnes, let you and I shake hands ; for when two part in this world, there's no knowing when they'll meet again.”

“ I shook hands with her, and tried to cheer her, saying gaily that I meant to come early in the morning to see her, and that I would catch her before she was up.

“ O ! I shall sleep sound,” said she ; ‘ come—mother will be so glad to see you.’

“ She left me, and her words sounded so strange to me that I stood in the door gazing after her. She walked on at her usual step, when she stopped as if she had forgot something ; I advanced towards her, but she went on, and I entered the house thinking of her.

“ The next day early, though there had been a most awful storm that night ; and the walking was bad in consequence, I went over to the mill, for I could not banish from my mind the idea that something had happened to Jane. As I drew near the mill I met Mr Lovell like one distracted ; the first word he asked me was, if I had seen Jane. I told him that I had not seen her since the afternoon before, and I repeated all that she had said. He seemed beside himself. He said that she had been at home until nine o'clock in the evening, and that his wife said she then stepped out of the door just before the storm came on, but that she thought she had returned and gone to bed. They had not seen her since. He bade me, for God's sake, to go and comfort his wife, and he would go to the village in hopes of hearing something of his daughter there. He started on like one half crazy, and I entered the house. There I saw Mrs Lovell ; Jane, as I have said, was a good scholar for a girl like her, and her mother had been searching the drawers and trunks to see if Jane had left anything that would tell of what had become of her. She discovered nothing ; but in a looking-glass drawer that belonged to the officer she found a lock of her hair. When I opened the door, and I rapped twice before I did so, and there came no answer, there was the mother, standing by the drawer as motionless as though she had been stone, and gazing on the lock of hair which she had just taken out of it. When she saw me, she threw herself into my arms and burst into tears : it saved her heart from breaking on the spot. All that I could get from her was, that Jane had returned home that night, got supper as usual, but did not eat any, though she made the efforts, nor did she name Mr Maynard once. The mother suspected Jane's feelings, and did what she could to comfort her, but never spoke of the officer. Mr Lovell, she said, was fatigued from working hard all day, and he laid down on a settee and went to sleep. The mother said, that she herself went into the next room, and in looking through she saw Jane kiss her father on the forehead, and clasp her hands together ; that then Jane entered the room where she was, and kissed her and said good night. Mrs Lovell, who was a simple woman, told her daughter, as she told me, that was right ; that she had better go to bed, and she would feel better in the morning. Jane, she said, left the room, and she was certain that she heard her go out ; and until the morning she felt as certain that she heard her footsteps as she returned and ascended the stairs. In the morning, surprised that Jane had not arisen, she entered her room to awake her, when there was the bed untumbled, with Jane's bonnet and shawl on it.

“ When I entered the house I left the door open after me, and while Mrs Lovell was telling me about poor Jane, their house dog, which was a great favourite with the daughter, came in,

and kept jumping up and wagging his tail around us, as if to draw our attention, and then he would run out of the door; but finding we did not follow him, he returned and renewed his solicitations. I remarked it to Mrs Lovell, and proposed that we should follow him; she said:

"Well, do so; for he has been going on so all the morning; and now I remember he was not in the house last night where he usually stays, for when I opened the door this morning he came in and acted as you have seen him."

"We followed the dog; he dashed impatiently ahead of us in this direction, and as we did not walk fast enough to keep close behind him, he came to this very spot, and then returned to us, and came again here. When we reached this place I looked over the bank; it has been washed away below since, and it is steeper now than it was then; I looked over, and the first thing I saw hanging to the end of a stump that stood near the water—the stream was very high then, remember, for it was swollen by the storm—was a bit of ribbon—pink ribbon. Though it was all dragged in the water, I thought instantly it was the very piece that poor Jane had had round her neck when I saw her in the afternoon. I was young then—I thought nothing of jumping down and getting it: indeed I didn't think at all but of poor Jane. In an instant I snatched it loose from the stump, when a part of it remained, it had caught so fast, and climbing up the bank, handed it to Mrs Lovell. Soon as she saw it she exclaimed, 'Tis her's! 'tis my dear daughter's! she's gone—gone!'

"'Twas with great difficulty I could get her to her house. She looked wildly round for the tracks of her daughter to the fatal spot, but the heavy storm had washed them all away. There was no trace of her but the bit of ribbon.

"Mr Lovell returned with several of his neighbours: he had heard nothing of her, except what was in confirmation of our fears. One of them stated that he had been up the valley, and was hastening home, by the mill road, late at night to avoid the storm, and about ten steps from this spot he met Jane. He asked her whether she was going so late, and she made him no reply, but passed on. He said the gathering clouds had nearly obscured the little starlight left, so that he could not clearly distinguish the person of Jane, if it was she; that he passed on in doubt, feeling assured that if it was, she would have answered him had she heard him, but his doubts were resolved on hearing her well known voice speak to the dog. This was all that was ever heard of poor Jane. The storm that night was awful. I remember it well; and it was in this storm the old miller who succeeded Mr Lovell used to say that the rock was rolled to the rocks below, and that, according to him, accounted for the calmness in the waters beside us, which always had been rough before, and which, as is the belief of many, has never been rough since, in calm or storm, rain or shine."

"Aunty, what became of the father and mother?" asked Fanny, wiping her eyes.

"They could not stay here after Jane's death. Dears, it was sorrowful to see them. The father neglected his mill, and the mother just did nothing but look over her daughter's things and talk about her. They grew so sad that they resolved to move into another neighbourhood. The day of the removal I came over to bid them good-bye, and when I entered the room there was Mrs Lovell with the lock of her daughter's hair, which she had found in the drawer of the officer's looking-glass. Poor childless thing! she was folding it up in the bit of Jane's neck-ribbon that I had taken from the stump. A mother's love is next to God's—dears, it's next to God's."

"Where did the father and mother go, aunty?" inquired Fanny.

"To the city, dear; they became very poor; he hired out as a miller near by the city, and one morning his body was found in the mill-race. It was not known whether he had drowned himself or not—he drank hard after his daughter's death, and he might have fallen into the race in a fit of intoxication."

"And the mother—"

"Poor thing, she went crazy, and was found roving about the streets, and was taken to the poor-house. She kept asking for her husband and her daughter, but, they say, behaved perfectly harmless until the keeper, who was a harsh man, and who, seeing her hand closed upon something that looked like a purse, attempted to take it from her. She then grew frantic, raving mad, but the keeper insisted upon taking it, and at last succeeded in doing so; but she died in the struggle to keep all that was left her of her daughter—the lock of hair with the ribbon round it."

Both the girls wept bitterly ; Sarah as much, if not more, than Fanny, although she had heard the sad narrative often before.

" And the officer !" exclaimed Fanny through her tears, " was nothing never found out what became of him ? maybe Jane left with him."

" No, dear, it was never thought so : an account of his marriage with an earl's daughter, and of his promotion, was republished from a London paper years after the peace. Perhaps he never heard of the miller's daughter again, and never thought of her in this world—but there is another, at whose awful bar he must hear and think of her—another when the retribution must fall on him. Children, God is just ; justice is his highest attribute ; and if it is, there must be a future state from whose terrible punishment all those broad hills cannot cover him. No : they and this stream, and these woods, and these lands, and the very ashes of that house that witnessed their meeting—her innocence and his guilt—and her poor father and her frantic mother—will rise up when she rises at the great day, and bear testimony against him. Merciful Father !" exclaimed old Agnes, elevating her face and hands, " I am not certain that he was guilty ; let me not judge thy creatures. Be merciful in thy judgment, but O ! forget not those who, like this poor girl and her broken-hearted parents, have suffered unto death."

CH A P T E R XXIII.

Ever since Fanny had told her brother of the conversation she had held with Sarah with regard to her uncle's wish that she should marry Bronson, Sidney had been a constant visitor at Elwood's. Previously he had occasionally visited Sarah, for he had always entertained a high esteem for her ; but latterly his feelings had assumed a tenderer cast—that emotion which is said to be akin to love proved its relationship in his bosom, for, imperceptibly to himself, the latter passion was stealing over him. Sidney's was a spirit of high and manly impulses. They were written plainly in his expansive forehead, and in his full, hazel eye. Inheriting a large fortune from his uncle, and expecting one nearly as large from his father, he had received the best education, but had not been brought up to any profession. His father had wished him to travel, but Sidney had the domestic virtues too much at heart to permit him to wander far from the parental hearth. The gaiety of the city had but little attraction for him ; he preferred the freer and franker intercourse of the country. Yet, whenever he sought the society of the former, he never failed to impress those who met him with the gentleness and ease of his bearing. He was not, however, a man to make a display in general society ; he cared not enough for its applause ; yet no one could be more popular than he was with all who knew him. There was no false pride or presumption in his character ; he was happy in seeing others happy ; those who did not know him, might take him at first blush to be an easy man, who wanted decision of character ; but a short observation, when he was tested, would soon show them their error.

Sidney had been passingly attracted by several fair ones, but before his heart had been the least touched something had disenchanted him, not from any waywardness on his part, but having a quick perception of the ludicrous, and more knowledge of the world than he had credit for, he had discovered, without even mentioning it to his sister, the artifice of more than one manœuvring mother and fashionable daughter, who estimated a lover as a merchant does a customer. Sidney was entirely without vanity ; but this, in more than one instance, he could not but see. In truth, the secret admiration which he had always felt for Sarah, without, in fact, knowing it himself, had made him indifferent to much visiting among the fair. When he came to hear the general rumour of the neighbourhood, that Bronson was proffering his suit to Sarah, with the consent of her uncle, he felt somewhat surprised ; but he soon discovered that Sarah disliked her suitor, and he thought no more of it but as an idle report. But when Fanny told him what Sarah had said to her of Bronson, his kindest sympathies were awakened for her, and they soon, as we have said, without his knowledge, kindled deeper feelings. Sidney was not accustomed to self-observation, and he generally gave himself up to his impulses. His attentions, therefore, to Miss Grattan, under these circumstances, were likely deeply to interest her. He had, as yet, never spoken to her of love ; for in his own bosom he had not recognised its existence ; but his attentions to her became daily more and more

subdued and gentle. His eye had learned to follow her's, and after he had met it, the next moment would find him by her side. He got books and music for her ; when in roaming through the woods he chanced to meet one of Mr Elwood's slaves returning home, he was sure to pluck a flower, if but a wild one, or a sprig of ivy, and send it to her. She scarcely ever heard of him, or from him, that something from himself—a word, or a look, or a flower, or a piece of music, did not show her that she had occupied his thoughts ; and when they were together, a thousand little circumstances, the more effective, as he thought not of them, produced the fluttering consciousness in her heart. Then the witchery of his quiet, but devoted manner, the natural eloquence of his conversation, and the unstudied grace and beauty of his person, so different from the loathed Bronson, for she could not but loathe him—her very sensibilities, which forbade her to hate, checked the disgust ; all these corresponded to make her heart irretrievably Sidney's.

For the last three weeks Bronson had been absent from Springdale. He had gone suddenly to a distant state on urgent business. Almost daily, during that time, Sarah had seen Sidney without the disgusting presence of Bronson, and she looked to his return as we contemplate a fearful evil awaiting us.

After Pinckney had gone to the city, that he might be under the care of the physician, Sidney, having his time entirely to himself, visited Sarah much oftener, as did his sister. He roved with her over the farm, and loved to accompany her to the cabin of old Agnes. The mellow influence of the autumn, instead of saddening, gave cheerfulness to her spirit ; or perhaps the autumn had nothing to do with it ; the absence of Bronson and the presence of Sidney made her happy. Sarah was a girl of genius, of deep and poetic susceptibilities ; and often, in her conversation and strolls with Sidney, she would lose her shyness and reserve, and betray the deep and impassioned fervour of her character. It was in such a mood as this, the very evening after aunt Agnes had told the story of Jane Lovell to herself and Fanny, that she and Sidney chanced to wander to the spot, where, seating themselves beneath the old tree, she repeated to him the tale in tones of eloquence and pathos that surprised him. In fact, her feelings were so excited that her utmost efforts could not control them, and they found vent in a flood of tears.

"My dear Sarah," said Sidney, taking her hand—it was the first time he had used the word dear to her, and as he spoke he put back with the other hand her hair from her forehead ; for, in giving way to her emotion, a lock had fallen over it,—"my dear Sarah, you should not visit this spot if it produces such an effect on you. Aunt Agnes must have told you the tale as eloquently as you have repeated it to me."

Sarah looked up into his face with ineffable sweetness, and said :

"There's a luxury in woe, we are told, Mr Fitzhurst ; sorrow breaks from us like the rain from the cloud, which gathers till it bursts—the bursting of one makes the sky clearer, and the other the heart."

As Sarah spoke Sidney played with the tangles of her hair, and, leaning over her, impressed a kiss upon her forehead. With a blush, that mantled brow and bosom, she arose from Sidney's side without yielding her hand ; he placed her arm in his, and thus together they entered the cabin of nurse Agnes.

This was all the declaration Sidney had as yet made. But Sarah loved, and with a devotion and constancy which knew no intermission : Sidney's shadow had rested upon her heart longer than she was aware. Perhaps much of the timidity and bashfulness which she had felt in visiting Holly proceeded from the fear that he would contrast her unfavourably with the splendid belles of the city whom he knew. The source of this feeling was in her secret admiration of Sidney ; but it lay unobserved by herself or by others, deep in her own heart, like the hidden currents of the fountain, flowing dark and deep, and solitary and sunless, away from the smile of hope and light of heaven, which at last breaks out in some lonely, lovely spot, unobserved by all but one silent watcher. O ! how in the bright day it sparkles, how many flowers like young affection spring up around it, how many birds like young hope lap their wings and lave in its pure gushing waters, and circle over it in the warm air, and go caroling up to heaven with their wood-notes wild ; and return to nestle in the trees that shade it—when, under its holy influence, Nature becomes a brighter worshipper of him who made it flow.

Sarah loved; the very associations with the unpoetic beings of her uncle's household had made stronger her tendencies to the passion, as the virgin ore ripens deep down in the mine. In her loneliness, her romantic imagination had formed a thousand dreams of the holiness and happiness of throwing a woman's faith and affection upon one worthy of her love. From the presence of Bronson she revolted at times with a revulsion that words cannot express; and it was only in dreaming of the happiness of others whose affections found something that they could cling to, that she forgot for a moment her own melancholy situation. Alas! the contrast, when truth forced it upon her, came with the more bitter blight. From it she could only turn again to romance, to poetry, to music, to flowers; and from the sense of ill around her, tax hope to the uttermost. Her intercourse with Agnes nursed such thoughts; and in listening to the old woman's tales, she would fain win her heart to the belief, that her life might be like some one of the maidens whose history her old nurse delighted to tell—a history dark and ominous—of broken-heartedness in its commencement and impervious to love, but which ended at last in a realization of all that makes romance beautiful. Often would poor Sarah dwell upon her darker stories, with the foreboding that such was to be her fate, and as often she would shut them from her mind, and bid Agnes tell some happier tale.

"It was no marvel—from her very birth
Her soul was drunk with love, which did pervade
And mingle with what's or she saw on earth;
Of objects all inanimate she made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks whereby they grew, a paradise,
When she did lay her down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream uncounted hours."

"Now, in the birth of love in a bosom so well calculated to be its home, it was beautiful to observe the dreamy and persuading spirit that possessed her. Everything around her took the colour of her hope. The falling of the autumn leaf had no sadness—it will be green again in the spring. The cloud-capt hills that lie so dark 'beneath the driving mists of the morning, will be gilded with the very earliest beams of the sun, and the birds will ere long haunt them with a thousand merry notes. The songsters may fly, but to no returnless distance. The gathering leaves and the drifting wood may obscure the sparkling waters, but they rest not for ever there; they are like the petty ills of life to one who is sure to be happy—the onward wave will bear them hence, and they shall return no more; and flowers shall spring up on the banks by which they passed, and woods and wilds, and hills and fields, shall rejoice together, like merry hearts at a festival.

"How emphatic the words of the Moor to the gentle Desdemona—

"But I do love thee,
And when I love thee not, then am I come again."

And are there not actions that speak as loud as words? Are there not thoughts that the tongue cannot fashion forth like the heart's speechmaker—the eye? Does not the tone tell more than the tongue? How often a careless word comes from an overflowing heart! a word which, but for the betrayal in its utterance, and the glare that accompanies it, would be as idle as the mocking-bird's notes.

When heart speaks to heart in the silence of two lovers musing side by side, who can give language to their tenderness? Had speech the power, they would not be silent.

"But I do love thee."

How many of Sidney's actions had told this to Sarah in his language? and though the mere words had not been uttered, yet through the sunny day and by the starry night, she believed that they were meant. And the breeze came to her pale cheek with a kiss from the rose, and the starry light of heaven imparted its lustre to her eye, and the arrowy flash of thick-coming fancies gave their swiftness to her blood, the bird in air its gracefulness to her motion, and the fairy in the dewy morning her lightness to her step—and the merriest thing in mythology and the holiest thing in revelation, their brightness and purity to her heart. If love could make of the clown Cymon a dignified and noble being, it can realize and personify, in a lovely woman, the angel of our brightest dreams.

And Sarah! how she would sit in loneliness at home,—but now no longer lonely,—and meditate the dreamy hours away. She would pause with the needle half-drawn through the cambric, and watch the butterfly disporting by on gilded wing, and wish that the dark days of

winter might be delayed—not for her sake—nature could not, would not darken her joy—but for the giddy insects. Her heart ran ever with worship of all created things. The worm to her mind had lost its insignificance—the reptile its venom—the brute its brutality. Poor Sarah! Even Bronson was a much better man than she had thought him—the devil is not so black as he is painted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"AND so, Howard," said Langdale, one day after dinner, as he arose from the table, and taking a seat near the window, extended his feet across another chair, while with his finger he struck the ashes from his segar, "and so you believe in love?"

Pinckney, who had almost entirely recovered from the effects of his wound, and who had been out riding before dinner, was reclining on a sofa in the recess by the window, musingly, but, with the complacency of one who feels the vigour of returning strength in his veins, was touching his whiskers, which he had neglected during his confinement, to assume their wonted smoothness. He glanced with a half-humorous expression at Langdale, and replied:—

"Yes, I believe in love. You, I suppose, think with the rhyme—

'Love is like a dizziness;
It winna let a pair body
Gang about his business.'

I believe in love; and, in spite of some transatlantic experience, in women also."

"You do, hey?" replied Langdale. "They're jades all, Howard—maybe you may know one exception, but she is like the phoenix, companionless. Therefore you observe this love has no 'dizziness' for me. Ha, ha! I delight in studying the sex. They're thought riddles—I think not. Vanity is their ruling passion, whether they play or pray—whether they sin or it saint it. Can an inferior woman bear the pain of a superior without a but, an if, or an and? And did ever woman yet forgive a slight?"

"Ah, my dear sir," said Pinckney, "it won't do; among older men than I you must seek for disciples. Love, you know, Rochester said, would cause the Deity to be worshipped in a land of atheists."

"Yes; and was there ever a more miserable devil, and a greater satirist of women, than that very Rochester?"

"Then the greater the compliment, as coming from their satirist."

"Think of his life—he was incapable of sentiment; he lived a life that will not bear repeating—all his love was sensuality."

"True; but Langdale, you've a turn for teasing—I understand you."

"No, no; I have told you that matrimony might make you a happier man, but then that you may be happier I would have you entertain a just notion on the subject. Your poets and imaginative men are scarcely ever happy in marriage. Why? because they have an exaggerated opinion of the excellencies of women, which they never realize. Marriage disenchants such a man; it is your plain, dull fellows who endure matrimony with patience—'tis a chain at best."

"A gilded chain, then——"

"But not a golden one, Howard, and the gilding soon wears off. However, there are exceptions, I admit. Some years ago I was descending the Mississippi, bound on business to New Orleans. We had a host of passengers on board—as motley a set as man ever yet met with—gamblers, horse-jockeys, preachers, lawyers, speculators, and doctors. Among them I observed a tall, gentlemanly man, whose health appeared delicate. We soon scraped an acquaintance, and I discovered that he was a Colonel B——, a Virginian gentleman of an old family, who was travelling for his health. He had a friend with him from the same state. We three smoked our segars together on the guards, and had a merry and intellectual time of it. We talked of the high names of Virginia, with whom the colonel was familiar; and his anecdote and agreeable conversation, with his state of health, interested me in him very much. I more than once discovered him perusing letters in a female hand, and I took him for a bachelor who had caught the fever for matrimony, and of course, as he had become a victim at rather a late period, that he was far gone. Sunday came. Our fellow travellers paid very

little respect to the day. Early in the morning some gentlemen given to music struck up his violin, while others seated themselves at the card-table. These things have since, as I am told, been reformed. The colonel walked the cabin observing the players, and listening to the music, when all at once a sudden thought seemed to seize him, and he opened his trunk, took from it a book, and taking a seat apart, he was soon lost in attentive perusal of it. In observed on opening the book he read several times an inscription on its title-page before he turned to its contents.

"Towards evening his companion came to me, and, smiling, said: 'I have a good joke upon the colonel.'—'What's that?' I asked. He replied, that when the colonel left home, his wife, who was a pious woman, had given him a Bible, and that he had promised to read it every Sunday; 'but he did not know it was Sunday,' said he, 'until I chanced to make the remark, when he stole away from me, and there he is, you see, studying theology.'

"What kind of a lady is his wife?" I asked. "The finest woman I ever met with," was the reply.

"I said nothing, but in walking up and down the cabin, I at last chanced to catch the colonel's eye as he raised it from the book, and advancing towards him I asked—

"What book is that which interests you so deeply?"

"He blushed slightly as he put it into my hand—strange that he should blush, hey?—and said, 'Read what's on the blank leaf.' I turned to it and read the following simple line:—

"To J. B.—, from his devoted wife.

Susan B.—."

You may think it odd, but from that moment I felt the deepest interest in the colonel. We became quite intimate, and when we parted he made me promise that if ever I went to Richmond, where he lived, I would call on him, and we exchanged hands. Last year in going to the Springs I went to Richmond, and doubtful if the colonel was living from the state of his health when we parted, and anxious to renew our acquaintance if he was, I made inquiry for him, and found that he was in town with restored health. I sent my card, and he instantly called, and with true Virginian hospitality insisted that I should make his house my home while I stayed. I could not resist. I found his lady a most fascinating and lovely woman. Plump, without a touch of fanaticism; cheerful without the least frivolity; intelligent, without the least taint of blue—a pattern of all that becomes a woman. I understand, indeed, from his own lips, that she had reclaimed him from a most dissipated life; and his neighbours told me that the change for the better which she had wrought in him was radical and almost miraculous. I have not for my own mother more respect than I have for that fair Virginian. I really felt a respect approaching awe in her presence—the only woman who ever touched me with a shadow of such a feeling. On leaving them, I could not but tell her that she was more than a Roman matron—she was a Christian one. The fact is, Pinckney, I cannot bear irreligious women: a sense of religion is to them a sheet-anchor amidst the allurements and vices of society—without it they are adrift, and are often taken as a waif."

"I agree with you," replied Pinckney, musing. "How beautifully the poet has spoken of women:

"Not she with treacherous kiss her Saviour stung,
Not she betrayed him with unholy tongue;
She, when Apostles shrunk, could danger brave,
Last at the cross, and earliest at the grave."

"Ha, ha! treacherous kiss," repeated Langdale; "do you ever court the muses, Pinckney?"

"I have courted them, as I suppose every young man has, but I've a poor knaeck at rhyme."

"I was given that way when I was at your age. Some lines that I wrote to a fair lady once, in the Tom Moorish style, upon 'blushing' and 'kissing,' involved me in a duel that nearly cost me my life."

"Where are the lines? how was it?"

"Some years since I met a fair lady at the Springs, who was a beauty, a coquette, and all that kind of thing; and once, in a moon-lit ramble, I desecrated her virgin lip—heaven save the mark!—she taxed me with being impudent, and asked me if I ever blushed. In reply, I wrote the verses I speak of. Well, we parted, with nothing between us, as I believed, but the

harmless kiss, and I thought no more of her. Some two months afterwards I received a tender epistle from the lady, who lived some three hundred miles off, couched in the kindest terms, and intimating very plainly that she considered herself engaged to me! Well, having no idea of being 'blest upon compulsion,' as Tom Moore says, I replied in as gallant a strain as I possibly could under the circumstances, stating that I had no idea that there was such happiness in store for me, and that if ever the consummation of my bliss occurred, it must be in leap year."

Pinckney laughed heartily. "And what then?" he asked.

"With the return of post came her brother, post haste, with a friend. The friend waited on me; and presenting the fatal lines, inquired if I was not the author of them, and if I had not addressed them to the lady.

"I confessed that I had addressed the lines to the lady, but I protested I had not addressed her in any other way.

"He assured me that it was no jesting matter, and forthwith handed me a challenge; at the same time remarking that he should be happy to accommodate the matter. I expressed my great willingness to have it accommodated, and asked in what way it should be done. He replied it would give him great pleasure to act as my groomsman. I told him that I was obliged to him for such a friendly offer upon so short an acquaintance, but that I had no idea of matrimony. He then peremptorily said there was no backing out; that I must fight. I tried to ridicule him out of the affair. He took it in high dudgeon, and said I would certainly be posted. I prepared pistols and coffee for two, and we accordingly met on the ground. I remonstrated; but the lady's brother and the gentleman who wished to be my groomsman insisted upon the duello. I stood two shots from the furious brother, firing each time myself in the air. His second shot struck my watch, and as Judge Parsons said, 'time kept me from eternity.' He insisted upon another fire, and my patience became a martyr for my life and died a violent death. I grew angry, and determined not to waste my saltpetre like the fragrance of Gay's flower on the desert air. I used to be a capital shot, and on the third fire I maimed my brother-in-law that would be in his right arm, and so the affair ended. The sacred Nine were frightened by the report of our pistols, and have never visited me since."

"The lines," said Pinckney, "the lines."

"Here they are," replied Langdale, advancing to the book-case, and taking them from a private drawer. "Here they are, in the identical condition in which I gave them, and in which they were returned to me."

Pinckney opened the gilt-edged note which Langdale handed him, and read as follows:—

TO ——, WHO, WHEN I KISSED HER, ASKED ME IF I EVER BLUSHED

O! yes, I know what 'tis to blush,
I've often felt the feeling,
The sweet suffusion of its flush
O'er every feature stealing.

But then, dear maid, I've such a face,
So dark I can't reveal it;
For, though I know I feel the grace,
Twould seem that I conceal it.

But you are like, with such a hue,
You cloud of purest white,
Where heaven's own smile is stealing through
With all its rosy light.

Dearest! I love thy kiss to woo,
And think thee like the flower,
That droops its head, yet yields its dew,
To the warm sunbeam's power.

And when I press thy lips to mine,
I love thy censoring themes—
Fairst! from a brow like thine
How sweet forgiveness beams.

Believe me, I thy sweet lips press,
As saints would press a shrine;
I feel thy willing power to bless,
And wish that power were mine.

If yielding's wrong, thy fairy brow
Can blush away the bane;
We veil the shrine wher'er the vow
Would violate its charm.

Nay, dearest, do not be afraid,
And yet seem something loath;
And while I'm kissing, gentlest maid,
Be blushing for us both."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Pinckney, "the lady must have thought that there are as many kinds of declarations as there are Puffs, according to Sheridan's 'Critic.' As this could not have been the declaration direct, it must have been considered the declaration preliminary."

"No, it was considered the declaration direct. The lady's susceptibilities were quick, almost as quick as her's whose hand a gentleman, when assisting her into a carriage, chanced

to press with the harmless intention of preventing her from slipping away. "Is, sir," said she, "if you come to that, you must ask me!"

"What became of the lady?" inquired Pinckney.

"My volunteer groomsman, no doubt, knew that there were good reasons why this ought to be married, and as he could not get me to take her, he made me happy by proxy, and took her himself; there was a take-in somewhere, you may depend upon it."

CHAPTER XXV.

The servant here interrupted the conversation between Pinckney and his master, by informing the former that Mr Fitzhurst's carriage was at the door waiting to convey him to Holly.

"Come, Langdale, will you not accompany me?" said Pinckney, as he arose.

"Thank you; no, not now; but your friend, Sidney, has been pressing me to call out and see him, and while you are there, I shall avail myself of the invitation; make my respects to the ladies, particularly to the fair Fanny; and remember, when you come to town, I shall feel hurt with you if you do not make my house your home, at least while Fitzhurst's town-house is unoccupied. Guard your heart, Howard, if you have any respect for bachelorism."

"I intend to do so," replied Pinckney, in a gay tone. "'My heart's in the Highlands,' as Burns says, 'and I am going to take charge of it'."

"Keep close watch over it," said Langdale as he followed his friend to the door; "or it will refuse to quit the Highlands with you, though you went wandering 'in search of the 'other fair one that you wot of."

Pinckney grasped his friend warmly by the hand, and, bidding him adieu, entered the carriage, which soon dashed away under the guidance of Pompey.

Pinckney was alone in the carriage, and reclining back in luxurious ease, he gave himself up to a thousand cheerful imaginings. Just as the very last rays of the sun had hidden themselves behind the hills, the carriage entered the lane leading to Holly. As the wheels moved almost noiselessly along, Pinckney leaned forward, and asked Pompey if there was any company at the house. Pompey checked his horse to a walk, and replied, "Yes, Master Pinckney, there be one of young master's friends there, that be come from the inferior (interior) of the state; he's been there three days."

"What's his name, Pompey?"

"Mr Bradley, sir; he be an old friend of young master's."

"I've heard of him," said Pinckney to himself. "He is the one of whom Sidney speaks praisefully; a beau, and a man of intellect, and all that. Go on, Pompey," he said aloud.

Pompey cracked his whip, and in a moment more the carriage whirled around a grass-plot, in the centre of which stood a holly-bush, and Pinckney alighted. He entered the house without rapping, for he was intimate enough with the household to waive all ceremony. He passed along the hall, intending to enter the usual sitting-room of the family. As he did so, he glanced into a large withdrawing room, and there beheld Fanny promenading—leaning on the arm of a very handsome man, whom he had no doubt was Mr Bradley.

Pinckney started, and the feeling which shot through his heart convinced him that of late he had not practised self-examination. Not thinking exactly what he was doing, he passed on in the direction of the chamber which he had formerly occupied, when the voice of Fanny arrested him.

"Mr Pinckney," she exclaimed, "did you not see me?"

"See you," said Pinckney, recovering himself, and with an air of gallantry, "to be sure I saw you, Miss Fitzhurst, and should have felt your presence though you had been surrounded by Egyptian darkness. I passed by that I might make my toilette fit for your presence."

"Still ceremonious; I am glad to see you looking so well. Mr Pinckney, allow me to introduce you to Mr Bradley." The young gentlemen saluted each other, and Fanny, still holding Mr Bradley's arm, asked:

"How is Mr Langdale?"

"Well; and he loaded me with compliments to present——"

"O ! he's completely harmless. I suppose now, that he has had you in care so long, you have returned, if possible, less romantic, and less of a believer in love, than ever ?"

"Quite the contrary ; I have been vindicating the tender passion so warmly from his assaults and stricisms, and thinking so much of you, that my heart has turned to tinder, and a single spark from a bright eye will set it in a blaze."

"Tis lucky for you, then, sir," said Mr Bradley, "that the twilight surrounds us."

"Yes, sir ; but you must remember, that in this fair presence the twilight has not always surrounded me ; and though it did, that there are some spirits who

"Move in light of their own making."

So speaking, Pinckney bowed and repaired to his apartment, where much of his apparel had been left.

"A fair-spoken gentleman, Miss Fitzhurst," said Mr Bradley, in a cold tone, as Pinckney's footsteps died away in the passage.

"And a fascinating one, Mr Bradley," replied Fanny, in a musing manner.

"Whiskers, and all the et cetera of a travelled gentleman, I discover."

"Yes, sir ; every one of them, except their vanity and passion for telling of foreign sights."

"Very much of a man of the world. Is he callous to beauty and to love ?"

"He says so," said Fanny, still musing.

"Your brother has spoken much to me of him."

"O ! brother thinks him past all parallel."

"What a confounding spirit your brother possesses ; he flings his friendship with as much reliance upon a friend as would a woman upon a lover after long years of trial and observation."

"Flings ! " exclaimed Fanny, passing from her musing tone, and unconsciously releasing her arm from Bradley's ; " upon my word, Mr Bradley, you pronounced that word 'flings' as though you were about to add, immediately afterwards, 'his friendship away,' and then the tone of sarcasm in which you are pleased to indulge, has not been for the first time erroneously applied, though never more erroneously."

Bradley bit his lip, and asked Fanny to take his arm, which she declined, saying she must prepare for supper.

"You wish to arrange your toilette for Mr Pinckney, do you ?" he said.

"Certainly, Mr Bradley ; as Mr Pinckney pays me that compliment I must return it," and she withdrew.

C H A P T E R XXVI.

WHEN Pinckney entered his apartment he threw himself into a chair and soliloquised :

"Well, the state of my heart is like that of a person who inhabits some romantic apartment, and who thinks he knows all its appurtenances—its whole condition, when suddenly a hidden spring is touched in the wall which discloses to him scenes that he dreamed not of—breathing, glowing pictures where he dreamed there was nothing but the cold marble. Ha ! my heart was stone, thought I—a petrifaction brought about by Miss Clara Atherton's unworthiness, and never to be impressed again—when lo ! at the word—no, the look of another—the marble melts, the rock gives forth the waters. Is it smitten but to flow fruitlessly ? If I have not lost my sagacity, this Mr Bradley has designs upon Fanny. But it is all folly ; why should I yield to such feelings ? I had given them up—I must aim at some object in life ; as it is, I am tossed about by every wayward circumstance and impression."

While Pinckney communed with himself, he arranged his toilet with more care than a disregard to the fair presence he was about to enter would warrant. The servant rapped at his door to announce tea before he left his mirror. Tea was scarcely over when a couple of carriages drove up to the door, and a number of Fanny's city acquaintances entered the house. They were her intimates, and had come *sans ceremonie*, as they said, to make a social party. In the withdrawing room they formed a brilliant circle. In spite of himself, Pinckney was abstracted and silent. Bradley kept close to Fanny, and was evidently exerting all his powers of address to please her. Pinckney could not but confess to himself, as Sir Lucius O'Trigger

says, that there was a great probability of success about him. Fanny was in high spirits, and Pinckney attributed it to the presence of Bradley.

Miss Moreland and Colonel Bentley were of the party, and a short time after their arrival, Sarah Grattan, who had been sent for by Fanny, entered the room. Pinckney took a seat beside her, and they entered into conversation, but their thoughts wandered from each other, for Sarah could not but perceive that Sidney was apparently deeply interested in Miss Moreland, with whom he was conversing, while Pinckney had not yet gained his self-possession. With a searching eye he glanced at Bradley, and discovered, as he thought, something in his manner that implied a consciousness of Pinckney's feelings, and of his own powers of pleasing.

In a morbid mood, Pinckney rose and left the room. He passed out of the house, notwithstanding the chilliness of the evening, and sauntered forth under the noble oaks that form an extensive park beside the mansion.

"What a fool am I," said he; "where is my boasted self-control? gone to the winds. Am I really in love with Fanny? This Mr Bradley thinks so, 'tis evident; and what a conscious air of success he bears about him. I found her hanging on his arm—he is an old acquaintance—has been here for days, and—yes, thinks himself successful. I thought I had created an interest in her feelings, and while I thought so I forgot to examine my own, and deemed them but passingly awakened. My senses are not in the best plight, and this night air won't string them anew. This Bradley is a man of manner, and, they say, of intellect."

As this last thought passed his mind, Pinckney entered the house, passed at the drawing-room door, and then passed on into the library. He stood leaning against a book-case in deep abstraction, when the door opened, and Fanny entered.

"Ah, Mr Pinckney!" she exclaimed, "what makes you such a truant from gay company?"

"Listen to me, Miss Fitzhurst, but for one moment," said Pinckney, as he gently closed the door; "but for one moment."

The impassioned tone in which he spoke produced an instantaneous effect upon Fanny; the lively expression of her countenance became subdued, and she looked on him with emotions, in which there was evidently some surprise.

"Miss Fitzhurst, listen to me; I cannot control my feelings—why should I hide them? I have been a wanderer, you know, in other lands, and there for a passing hour I deemed my feelings interested; they were interested in one who soon broke the charm. I left Europe with the conviction that the shadow of the wing of love, not even upon his flight, should ever cross my heart again. I held it a romance which thereafter was to be to me like the bowl that was broken and the wine that was spilt; a romance that pleased me but for a moment, and left me the next to feel but more keenly the dull reality to which sober truth abandoned me. Since then, I have made a jest of love and of myself for fancying that I was possessed of the emotion—yes, made a jest of it until I saw and knew you, and even then I struggled with my own heart as man never struggled. I cultivated the stoicism which Langdale inculcates, and tried to hug it to my heart as a miser would his gold. I struggled in vain: there was a fair image there that melted the icy philosophy. I saw you to-night; I saw another attractive to you, and the truth—the full conviction of the state of my affections—rushed upon me with a force which I could not resist or conceal. I have been wandering this half hour in the park, trying in vain to school my feelings into something like a fitness for society. I could not—I could not. I repaired hither to look at some old sentence of philosophy, and catch the feeling, when you—the bright creator of all this tumult in a heart I deemed callous to your sex, entered. Forgive me; I know I have been hasty; but as you—but, Miss Fitzhurst, as you value the peace of mind of another, think of what I say when I declare how much I love you."

At this moment the library door opened, and Mr Bradley appeared.

In the meantime the feelings of Sarah Grattan, who still sat in the withdrawing room, were as disquieted as those of her late companion. Colonel Bentley had taken Pinckney's place when he left the room, and, being fond of teasing, and not indifferent to Sarah himself, and suspecting her interest in Sidney, he said—

"I suppose you have heard the news, Miss Grattan?"

"What news, colonel?" she asked.

"Why, that our friend Sidney is to marry Miss Moreland,"

"Ah," said Sarah faintly; "yes, yes—is it so?"

"A fact I have every reason to believe."

At this moment Miss Rachellina, in all the dignity of antiquated maidenhood, approached them in her way to the other side of the room, and the colonel said to her—"Miss Rachellina, I am just telling Miss Sarah of the news; I am surprised she has not heard it, and she seems surprised at hearing it."

"What is it, Colonel Bentley?"

"That my friend Sid is to change the name of Miss Moreland."

"I don't see why Miss Grattan should be surprised," said Miss Rachellina, sharply, for at the moment Fanny's jests with her brother with regard to Sarah arose in her memory; "I don't see why Miss Grattan should be surprised, I am sure it is a most desirable match in every respect. Miss Moreland's family is highly respectable in every way; her connections are all among our first people; she has been brought up in the very best of society, and is an accomplished, fashionable, and beautiful woman."

So speaking, with a stern glance at Sarah, Miss Rachellina passed on. A few moments afterwards Sidney went up to Sarah, and said to her that arrangements which he had been making with Miss Moreland to pay a visit to some of her acquaintance with her for a few days, had prevented him from taking a seat by her sooner, when Miss Rachellina called him to her, and gave him some commission to execute in another room. Sarah's heart sunk within her. Colonel Bentley not suspecting the depth of her emotions, but observing her ashy paleness, supposed she was seized with sudden indisposition, and exclaimed—

"Bless me, Miss Grattan! you are ill."

"Yes, sir; yes—rather so. May I take your arm, and will you walk with me into the open air for a moment? the room is close—I shall recover myself in a moment."

"Certainly, certainly;" and the colonel assisted her out of the room. Arrived in the entry, she begged him to wait for a moment; and, hurrying to the chamber where she had deposited her bonnet and cloak, she returned, and taking his arm, went out into the air.

"I really wish that I were at home," said she. "I feel, indeed, ill."

"You had better enter the house, Miss Grattan, and go to a chamber, and lie down."

"No, no; I thank you—no. Colonel, is not that carriage there, with the lamp burning, the one in which you came out?"

"It is, Miss Grattan."

"Do—do, then, in pity's sake, let your driver take me home."

"Certainly: if you wish it I will accompany you, but had you not better remain here?"

"Indeed I must not; my uncle will expect me. You need not accompany me."

"It gives me pleasure, if you will go," said the colonel, and he handed her into the carriage, and gave the driver directions.

Before they arrived at Mr Elwood's, Sarah, by a powerful effort, had somewhat rallied her spirits. She contrived to say, in a tone of cheerfulness, that she was much better as they drove to the door, and the colonel, after handing her in, and lingering for a few minutes, bid her adieu.

Sarah followed him to the door, and requested him to make apologies for her to Fanny. He promised to do so, and the coach drove off. Sarah stood unconsciously gazing after it, when her uncle came up to her, and said—

"Sarah, you're soon home; suppose you got tired of the flummery there, child. I got a letter from Brosson to-day; he expressed bushels of love for you. He pressed me very much upon your marrying him. Come, girl; come, now; don't dilly-dally so; say when."

"Uncle, is mercy spare me upon that subject?"

"Spare the devil, Sarah; I tell you it must be. Now, that's a good girl; say when."

"Spare me now a little while, and you may dispose of me as you choose," said Sarah, in an agonised tone, and she passed into the house, and, lifting a light, repaired to her chamber.

Poor Juliet in her agony was not sadder than Sarah that night. She took her needle-work, and tried, by a strong effort, to compose her mind; but, alas! the mournful tales of blighted love that nurse Agnes was so fond of telling her, rose so vividly to her memory, that they seemed to pass between her and the wall, as though she were sitting at a play—more as though she witnessed the reality. Her mind particularly dwelt upon the story of Jane Lovell—

her fearful end, and the desolation that fell upon her parents, and their deaths seemed to press like a weight at her heart. Sarah often attempted poetry, though she was too modest to show any of her attempts to even her nearest friends. The following fragment which she blotted with many tears as she wrote it, and thus found in weeping some relief, may, perhaps, dimly shadow forth to the reader her emotions. They were written some days after this event:

He never said he loved me,
Or vowed to me a vow;
Yet, when I recollect his smile,
Methinks I hear him now.
For he would tell of those who loved,
And tell their tale as true,
And gaze upon me when he told,
As if he meant to woo;
And if he wished that I should love,
Would he not love me too?

For he would ever talk of love,
And say true hearts should be
An echo of each other's thoughts—
A ceaseless constancy.
And he would take my hand and smile,
And say 'twas passing fair;
And when I bowed my head to blush,
He'd part my braided hair,
And whisper burning words to me
As fervent as a prayer.

He'd tell me of the poet's tale,
Which is but told to prove,
Why the maid should love for ever,
And marry with her love.
Thus, when he told what happy thoughts
Into my heart would steal,
Methought, too, that his very look
Did happy thoughts reveal;
But maybe love's a phantasy
That only maidens feel.

* * * * *

I recollect the evening well,
The moon was bright above,
And heav'n, and earth, and all around,
Seemed telling of their love.
He told me of two parting lovers
Allotting such an hour
To bless the light of yon far star,
And by its loneful power
To view their hearts in every fate,
Whatever storms might lower.

We roved along the clear stream's side,
Down by the aged tree—
The moonbeams o'er the rustling leaves
Seemed to fit and flee.
And thus, all tremulous the wave
Mirrored the light above,
Like one who feels, yet fears to tell,
Her early hope of love;
Yet wildly will her young heart beat,
As the trembling ripples rove.

And further down, the shadeless wave
Received within its breast
Heaven, and all its hosts of stars,
Like love when all confessed.
Thus is it that our wayward life
Is like a wayward stream—
There, and not a ray can pierce,
And here, there's but a gleam;
While further down, the cloudless wave
Reflects a cloudless beam.

Here and there a meteor star
Fell from the holy sky,
As hope that is not fixed in heaven
Is always sure to die.
I've thought since, in a musing mood,
Of treacherous memory,
The lover's star it was that fell,
And love no more should be.
Many a night I'll see it yet,
But there's a cloud on me.

The merry stream was rippling on,
It seemed a living being,
Glorifying Him above—
All-knowing, and all-seeing.
It stole along, in waveless haste,
Over the maiden's sleep,
Under the rock, and by the willow,
Rolling dark and deep.
Tis said, her spirit rests at last,
And has forgot to weep.

I, weeping, told the maiden's tale,
And pointed out the willow
That weeps for ever o'er the fate
Of the love forsaken's pillow.
In tenderest tone he told me
I should not seek the spot,
That my heart would be too mournful
If thus I mourned her lot.
But now I'm there the live-long day,
Remembering—but forgot.

Oh, God! and when I view the stream
A rolling on peace,
Methinks that if I slept with her,
My troubled thoughts would cease;
For it ever seems to woo me—
That quiet, holy stream,
And for me it has no false smile,
And there I could not dream.
I am not what I used to be,
Alas! I cannot seem.

Tis said that she he seeks to woo
Is fairest of the throng,
And gayest in the laughing bower
Of revelry and song.
He used to braid wild flowers for me,
But now, with altered tone,
He tells how soon the flowers will fade,
And what a splendid nose—
And vows he never loved but her,
And loves but her alone.

My hope has been a late-born flower
Nipt by an early frost;
When the flower was blooming brightest
All its bloom was lost.
The maid who builds the airy dream,
Forgets it must depart—
The bird will fly the drooping flower,
And hope the broken heart.

* * * * *

I feel I am an orphan now,
With the abiding sorrow,
That I am all forlorn to-day,
And must be so to-morrow.

* * * * *

Tis said that hope is everywhere,
Even with the broken-hearted—
It smiled upon me when we met,
Where was it when we parted?
The fairest flowers we know must blight,
The earth is tempest riven,
The maiden gives her heart in love—
When given, all is given;
Though earth forsakes the broken heart,
There's always hope in heaven.

CHAPTER XXVII.

As twilight gathered in on the evening of Sarah's sad return home, a humbler personage of our tale, Peggy Blossom, might have been seen emerging from the cabin of aunt Agnes. Her face wore a melancholy expression, and she looked round as if she were surprised it was so near night. Her grandmother was ill, and had frequently expressed a strong desire to see Agnes, saying, that the cheerful voice and conversation of the old woman would comfort her. Aunt Agnes had promised to visit granny Gammon the next day. With a quick, but not as cheerful a step as was usual with her, Peggy turned along the old road by the mill. To beguile the loneliness of the way, she caroled forth, as if with a light heart, the following song, which was known in Springdale as the composition of a drunken shoemaker, just such a "Souter Johnny" as Burns has described in his 'Tam O'Shanter.'

THE MERRY MILLER.

" O ! my mother's always scolding.

At the miller in the glen;
And my father, he just calls him
The very worst of men.

But I've seen the merry miller,
And the miller has seen me;
But not through father's specs, my Joe,
Did I the miller see:

O ! I've seen the merry miller,
I met him in the glen;
And the stars that shone so brightly,
They only know the when.

And the stars that shone so brightly,
They will not tell the tale;
But I've seen the merry miller,
And true love shall prevail.

The Jeafy tree was o'er my head,
And I was in my pride;
The stream was smiling at my feet,
The miller by my side.

But one short day the mill shall stop,
While off to church we steal;
And leave my mother scolding there—
A scolding for her meat.

But one short day the mill shall stop,
And then my merry mill,
Click, clack, the busy wheel shall go,
And tick shall go the till.

O ! merry is the mill, my Joe,
And merry rings the siller,
And merry is the miller's wife,
And merry is the miller."

As Peggy was humming over for the third time the last verse of the song, she heard footsteps behind her, and, on turning round, Jack Gordon stepped up to her, and said,—

" The merry miller, and the merry miller's wife; I suppose that's Hardy and yourself, Peggy?"

" And suppose it was," replied Peggy, in a careless tone.

" But, by —— ! I won't suppose it was," said Gordon, angrily; " Hardy would do like Joe Hitt, all he could to injure Bob; and I did all I could to save him, and I expect other returns for it."

" You must go to Bobby for returns, Mr Gordon; I have none to make."

" None to make ! I have, then. You must marry me, Peggy,—yes, must, or you, and your granny, and your Bobby, your cousin Bobby, will rue the day you ever saw John Gordon."

" I rue it now," said Peggy.

" You do, hey ? you shall rue it worse than this; for what do you rue it ? tell me what harm have I done to you—and have you not made a fool of me ?"

" Mr Gordon, I want to have no quarrel with you—why can't you let me alone ? why do you beset my path in this way ?"

" Your path—beset your path; didn't you show me all sorts of favours over the other chaps when I first saw you ? Did you not, I ask you ?" said Gordon, in a stern tone.

" My favours, as you call them, are my own, Mr Gordon, and I can give them as I please—it's enough for you. I don't see, if you have the spirit of a man in you, how you can beset me in this way; it's enough for you to know that I have no favours for you."

" Yes, but I have favours for you !" exclaimed Gordon; " an' death and destruction shall come of this before I'm jilted in this fashion. Do you think I'll be made a fool and lick-spittele of by a girl, and come and go at her beck and call ? No ! once when I talked to you about having me, you didn't refuse; you said nothing; you as much as gave consent. You

took presents from me ; you knew that the looking-glass was meant for you—you had it hanging up in your house—and you must take a miff all at once, and send it to the village, and get it broke by the way, and I must have the clowns and fools laughing at me. No ! by hell I won't stand it ! you must have me, Peggy. You listened to me once, why not listen to me again?"

" Listening is not consenting, Mr Gordon. To tell you the plain truth, I don't like you, I can't like you, and I won't like you."

" Peggy, don't drive me desperate," said Gordon, laying his hand with some violence on her shoulder. " You must have me ; I've sworn it ; and through death and destruction I'll wade before I let you off."

Peggy was frightened at the deep vindictive tone of Gordon, and walked on rapidly without saying a word. He kept up with her, however, and seemed to be aware of the effect which he had produced, and by such means he hoped to control her, for he said—

" I'll see you dead before I'll suffer you to jilt me in this way. Do you think I'll have the whole village laughing at me ? What I offer you is fair—honourable—what you listened to : and because folks don't choose to like me, and that infernal old buck-roo hussey (alluding to Miss Rachellina) don't approve of my conduct, do you think I am going to give up for them ? Blast them, I'll burn them out first. If you make me desperate, Peggy, you must take what it brings."

" Do you make such threats in the face of the law ?" said Peggy, endeavouring to rally her spirit, which was not a tame one.

" Yes !" exclaimed Gordon furiously, " in the face of heaven and earth. Your treatment is such lately that my mind's made up. You wouldn't even speak to me in the village the other day—my mind's made up. You must stop here on this very spot, and give me your promise, or worse will come of it ;" and as Gordon spoke, he stopped and seized her hand, but in an instant he released his grasp on hearing the voices of persons who were evidently advancing towards them. On hearing them, Peggy darted away from Gordon, and hastened on to meet them. Gordon sprang after, and seizing her, bid her stop and listen to him. " At least promise to say nothing about this," he said ; " I'll come and see you to-morrow—don't make me desperate."

This fear of exposure on the part of Gordon gave courage to Peggy, and she broke from him and advanced. Gordon turned for a moment, as if with the intention of passing towards the hills, and then, with a careless air, followed Peggy, who soon met those whose voices they had heard. They proved to be her cousin Bobby and Hardy the miller. Hardy was a blunt, honest fellow, and one of Peggy's admirers. He glanced at Gordon, and said—

" Good evening, Miss Peggy. How are you, Gordon ? Miss Peggy, I reckon you and Gordon have been sparking it, as you are together here."

" Sparking it," said Peggy, with a toss of her head, " together here ; I hope this is the last time Mr Gordon and I will ever be together—with my free will we shall never meet again."

" There, Jack Gordon !" exclaimed Bobby, " I hope you'll mind that."

" Mind ! O, certainly I " replied Gordon ; " I'll mind whatever a woman says to me, or such a mighty man as yourself, Mr Robert Gammon."

" I'm man enough for you, Jack Gordon !" said Bobby, poising himself upon his longest leg and supporting his equilibrium with the point of his lame one.

" Ha, ha, ha !" laughed Gordon, in bitter derision.

" John Gordon," said Peggy, with firmness, and even with dignity, " there's been enough of this ; go your way. Never come to say granny's again—never speak to me again. I tell you here, before Robert Gammon and Mr Hardy, that I despise and hate you ; that you have been a pest to me, and I'm thankful that this has happened, for I shan't be tormented by you any more."

" You don't know that, Peggy, my girl," said Gordon, affecting to laugh. " I'll call and see you when you're in a better humour, but I won't tell tales out of school. Good-bye, cousin Bobby ; I reckon you think yourself man enough for cousin Peggy too, don't you ? ha, ha !" So speaking, Gordon walked off in the direction of the hills.

VOLUME II.—CHAPTER I.

PUNCTUAL to her promise, nurse Agnes, or as she was commonly called, aunt Agnes, visited granny Gammon on the ensuing day. Agnes thought the old crone very ill, so much so that she determined to remain with her. It was the first day of the fall races; and Bobby, with the assistance of Pompey, who had laid up the odd change which his master and others had given him, had established a booth on the ground for the double purpose of seeing the sport, of which he was passionately fond; notwithstanding the injury he had received in indulging in it, and at the same time of making a little money.

Peggy and aunt Agnes were the watchers by the humble bed of granny Gammon. The light of life in the fayalid was waning fast to extinction. She seemed like one who was sinking to sleep after a long and toilsome day's work, but whom the excess of labour had made restless, for she moved at intervals, and would open her eyes languidly for a moment as she tried to change her position. The wrinkled face, the freckled forehead, the cheeks and chin covered with large moles, the thin and bueless lips, over which its muscles had no control, all betokened bodily debility, that could not under any circumstance hold the vital spark long, and which now was about to yield it without nature having the strength to make an effort to hold it.

The old woman's mind evidently wandered at intervals throughout the day, for at times she would pick the bed-clothes as though she were picking cotton; and when Towser, that Bobby had left behind, barked as the numerous carriages and other vehicles rattled to the races, granny Gammon would in a querulous tone call to Bobby not to tease the dog, or bid the animal be still and let her go to sleep. Then, again, she would rouse herself, ask after Bobby, speak reprovingly of the races, and turn and talk to Agnes upon religious topics, as if she sought ghostly consolation.

"You must not be cast down, child," said Agnes, in a low voice to Peggy, in one of those periods when the patient appeared to sleep; "you must not be cast down, but it is not in the nature of things that your grandmother could live long; and yet," she continued, in a musing tone to herself, "I thought I should go first as I am the oldest, but all in God's appointed time. Peggy, let this be a lesson to you, that when you grow old you may look back without regret, and forward with hope. (Peggy was weeping bitterly.) Child! it is natural that you should weep, for your grandmother is near and dear to you, but we're all in the hands of a merciful God. He knows what is best for us, and what we take for evil is meant for good."

"What shall I do—what shall I do—what will Bobby do," said Peggy, sobbing aloud, "if granny dies?"

"Don't laugh so, child," said the old grandmother, making a restless movement with her hands, "when you know I'm ailing." Then opening her eyes and casting them on Agnes, she continued after a pause, "Aunty, you're kind to come and see me—do you know I am like to die? Now ain't it strange that the youngest should die first—ain't it a strange ordering of Providence?"

"We are all in God's hands," said Agnes, reverently looking up.

Thus passed the day. Half an hour after night Bobby returned from the races, and stealing in quietly to his cousin Peggy's side, he asked how his granny was.

"Awful bad, Bobby," said Peggy, "awful; what did you do at the races?"

"First rate," said Bobby; "I had such a run from fellows that spent money like water—see here (producing a handful of money tied up in the end of a pocket handkerchief). Poor granny, you know, cousin Peggy, she was always wishing as how that we had a cow of our own. Well, there was a first rate cow and calf raffled for at the races for fifty dollars. Jack Gerdon was there knocking round and spending money like dirt, and corned at that; so he taken a chance for five dollars—he's always good luck—so he wins her. Then he come to me and made friends, you know; that is he wanted to—he spent money, hard silver, treating the fellows at my booth all day. So I couldn't but be civil to him, inasmuch as he said as how he was in a pet when he said them aggravating things. Well, he stuck to it that I should

take the cow and calf; he'd let 'em go, he said, at twenty, cash. There'd been a fellow treat-ing round at my booth, an' I had changed a twenty for him; there, said Jack Gordon, give me that note and take the cow and calf. Well, you know, cousin Peggy, if I don't like Jack Gordon, a bargain's a bargain, an' I'd just as lieve get one out of him as anybody. Now granny'll have a cow, won't she?"

The bed of the invalid was in the corner of the only room that the cabin contained; a rough pair of stairs led to a loft where Bobby slept; and it was in the corner, by the stairs, that he held this conversation in a whisper with his cousin. His granny was in a lethargy, from which his entrance had not roused her. Agnes sat beside her, watching anxiously her countenance.

At this moment, without the inmates of the cabin having heard the least sound of approaching footsteps or voices, the door was thrown suddenly open, and a constable and several other persons roughly entered.

The constable glanced round the room, and on beholding Bobby, who was in the act of exhibiting his money to Peggy, he walked up to him, and seizing him by the shoulder, said,

"Come, young man, give me up that money; I'm sorry for you, but you're caught at last."

"In God's name, what's the matter?" asked Agnes; "have you no respect for the aged and the dying, to break in the house in this way?"

Here Gordon entered the cabin, and said, in a tone, of which he could not stifle the malignity—

"He'll not deny it; where is it?" The constable handed Gordon a bank bill. "There," said Gordon, "did you not give me that note for my cow?—look at that other money, damn me, if it ain't the same kind. Peggy, how do you do? Didn't you give me that note, cousin Bobby?"

The constable, rough as he appeared, was struck with compassion on beholding the aged and sick grandmother, as she opened her eyes, and gazed on them in bewilderment, and the unutterable astonishment and anguish depicted in Peggy's features; he therefore said to Bobby,

"See, Bob Gammon, I just say to you, that you needn't say anything to criminate yourself unless you choose."

"Criminate myself!" said Bobby, in a seeming amazement. "I don't understand: let me look at it—yes, I did give Jack Gordon that bill for his cow; at any rate a bill a good deal like, for it had just such a cross on the corner."

"Who did you get it from?" asked the constable.

"That's what I don't exactly know," said Bobby. "I never saw the man before, to my knowledge, but I could tell him if I was to see him again."

"Well," exclaimed Gordon, "you passed that note on me, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Bobby, "I think that is the note."

"Gentlemen, you hear that," said Gordon. "Mark! he don't deny it. My little lass, you're a bright one. That note I went to pass at the tavern, and they had a warrant-out on me for passing counterfeit money. I just want to saddle the right horse, that's all. Look if that money ain't like this," said Gordon to the constable, who had taken from the boy the money he had been showing to his cousin when they entered.

"Yes," said the constable, "these notes are on the same bank. I'm sorry for you, young man, but you must go with me."

"Where, where?" asked Peggy, taking, imploringly, the hand of the officer.

"Before Squire Norris, Miss Peggy—I must do my duty—I'm 'fraid it's all up with him."

"All up with who?" said granny Gammon, rousing herself, and speaking in a tone that was strangely sharp and hollow by turns. "No, I'm ailing; but I'm younger than sunty Agnes. So I thought I'd sit up with the old woman—it's going hard with her. John Gordon, what do ye want?" she exclaimed, now first recognising Gordon; "didn't I forbid you coming here?"

"Granny, I had to come here, or else go to gaol. Some people wanted to cry mad dog at me, as Peggy knows. That hurt my character with a good many. I'm for saddling the right horse. Where did Bobby get all this counterfeit money from?"

The old granny uttered a shrill scream, and raising herself up in bed, gazed at Gordon with a look from which all mental wandering had fled.

"It's you, is it, John Gordon; and you accuse my Bobby of this? You lay it at his door.

and my door, and I am a dying woman, and his grandmother. You know, John Gordon, in your heart—I see it in your face—you know he is as innocent as the babe unborn. No; you've beat him, and you've beat my Peggy—and you've come in my dying hour, and all in hate. You'll think of this when your time comes, John Gordon—an' it will not come to you in your bed. I'm dying, an' I tell you so—it will not come to you in your bed. Go out of my house, an' let me die in peace; if ye don't, I'll curse you with my dying breath at my own door-stone. Bobby is innocent as a lamb," she continued, addressing the constable, but in a faltering tone, and gasping for breath; "he's as innocent as a lamb," she muttered again, and sunk back upon her pillow a corpse. The excitement and exertion had exhausted the little remnant of life.

Bobby broke away from the officer, who had, in fact, released his grasp at the horror of the scene, and, with his cousin Peggy, threw himself by the lifeless body of his grandmother. He spoke not a word, while Peggy's screams rent the air.

Gordon looked on conscience-smitten and appalled, but on aunt Agnes saying to him—“That if Bobby was innocent he had an awful sin to answer for,” he rallied and replied:—

“Did he deny passing the money on me? As for the old woman, how did I know she was sick? damn her—her time was come, any how!”

“Come,” said the constable, going up to Bobby, and raising him from the bed; “this is hard, but I must do my duty.”

“For God's sake,” exclaimed Peggy, “have a little pity on us!—on me—must I be all alone? You heard what granny said; they were her dying words!—indeed he is innocent.”

“Cousin Peggy,” said Bobby, in a tone strangely calm and decided for one of his years and character under the circumstances, “I'll go; aunt Agnes will stay with you. As sure as granny is dead there, I'm innocent,—she spoke the truth. You stay by poor granny—I'll go.” He walked up to his cousin, embraced her with a long and passionate embrace, while she sobbed as though her heart was bursting. He then stepped up to the corpse, took its hand in his, gazed upon the relaxed features intensely, as if to satisfy himself that the spirit had departed; and pressing his lips to its forehead, said calmly, “I'm ready,” and walked firmly out, followed by all of the party, save Gordon, who lingered a minute, when aunt Agnes told him he had better go.

“Peggy, let me speak to you—just one moment,” said he.

“Peggy, come here, I tell you,” he said again in a commanding tone, and stamping his foot upon the floor.

“You're enough to make the dead body rise and drive you out,” said aunt Agnes in deep indignation; “begone, or I'll call the constable and make him take you.”

Doggedly Gordon left the cabin, and Agnes rose and fastened the door after him. The persons who had left with Bobby in custody stood within a few steps of the cabin, seemingly waiting for him. As the door closed on him, he called out, and asked with an oath, “If they were not going to search the house.”

“Not now, Gordon,” said the constable; “here's enough of proof—outside here between the logs—this chap found a tin box full of it.”

“Go ahead, then,” said Gordon, “to the squire's.” The whole party accordingly proceeded to the village, to the residence of Squire Norris.

CHAPTER II.

LATTERLY the whole country had been flooded with counterfeit money. Justice had been on the alert to discover the offenders, but as yet, unless it was fastened upon Bobby, without avail. Suspicion had been hovering round different persons, but had not been steadily fixed upon any one. It attached to Gordon as strongly as to any other, but nothing like proof of the fact had transpired against him. If he were guilty, he therefore had a double motive for fixing the charge on Bobby; viz., to clear his own skirts, and to revenge himself upon the Gammons.

At the tavern in Springdale Gordon had, with much ostentation, displayed the bank note which he had received from Bobby in payment for the cow, exclaiming, “It was a beauty.”

The tavern-keeper, on inspection, pronounced it a counterfeit, and Gordon stoutly maintained it was not. High words grew between them, till at last he told Gordon that it was his belief that he knew that it was a counterfeit, and that he believed it was not the first time he had it knowingly in his possession. At this Gordon knocked the tavern-keeper down. The publican was an arrant coward, and therefore he made no attempts at retaliation, but gathered himself up, and forthwith repaired to the magistrate, who issued a warrant against Gordon, both on the charge of passing counterfeit money, and for the assault and battery.

Gordon pleaded guilty to the assault and battery, and paid the fine. On the charge of passing counterfeit money, he boldly asserted his innocence. There was no proof against him, and he was discharged, when he obtained a warrant against Bobby, stating that he had received the note from him in payment for the cow, and that he believed the boy had quantities of it. Our readers know the result so far. On arriving at the magistrate's office they found the squire seated at his desk, and eager for the examination. Gordon was sworn. He repeated the charge he had made against Bobby at the boy's grandmother's, though more circumstantially, being under oath. When he got through, Bobby said he didn't deny it, that he gave Gordon the note in payment for the cow, and that he received it from a man he did not know by name, but whom he would recognise should he ever meet him. He was, however, completely stricken dumb, when another witness, whose testimony was corroborated by the constable, produced a tin box filled with counterfeit paper on the same bank with the note passed on Gordon, and made oath that he found it without the door of granny Gammon's cabin, between the logs. The constable also testified that he had seen that very box, which he knew by a mark on the lid, in Bobby's possession at the races.

"Robert Gammon, have you anything to say?" asked the magistrate.

Bobby shook his head, but spoke not.

"You had better make a clean heart, Robert Gammon, and tell all about your accomplices."

Bobby made no answer.

"What have you to say about the box?" asked the magistrate, solicitous of obtaining some clue for the detection of others.

"It's true," said Bobby; "I had that very box at the races to-day. Jack Gordon asked me to let him look at it, and I took my money out of it, and give it to him."

" Didn't I give it back to you?" asked Gordon.

" You did," replied Bobby.

" Why didn't you say so, then, my lark?—you don't want to fix counterfeiting on me, do you?"

Without noticing the remark of Gordon, Bobby said to the magistrate:

"The box was given to me by Jack Gordon in the city at the circus, when I got into that other counterfeiting scrape. I had it ever since till to-day; he told me it was a good thing to keep money in, an' I kept mine in it. As I said, he gave it back to me, and somehow, a little time afterwards, I lost it on the race-ground, or it was stolen from me."

" You'd better make a clean heart," repeated the magistrate.

" I've no more to say," replied Bobby.

" I must commit you," said Norris; "the county court's now sitting, so you'll have a quick trial. The witnesses must give security for their appearance."

A few minutes afterwards, without saying a word, Bobby entered the gaol in the custody of the constable, followed by Gordon, who told the officer in a whisper that he thought he could get something out of the boy about the gang of counterfeiters, if he would let him hold a little private discourse with him. The gaoler willingly consented, and Bobby and Gordon were shown into a kind of anti-room, and left together.

"Bobby," said Gordon, in a sympathising tone, advancing to the boy's side, "if you'll be my friend, I'll be yours. I can get you out of this scrape yet."

"How?" said Bobby, throwing his eye on him for a moment, and then letting it fall on the ground.

"Bobby, we must understand each other every pace and more in the matter. I appeared hard on you like at your granny's, and afore Norris, that I might blid them, and do for you

to a greater certainty. When I was taken up you wouldn't blame me for telling where I got the money, could you—now say, could you?"

"Go on," said Bobby; "say what you have to say."

"But mind," resumed Gordon, "we must understand each other," and as he spoke he stink his voice to a whisper; "we must mind how we talk here, these 'damp dull' walls have quick ears, I can tell you. Are you agreed?"

"Say what you want to say at once, Jack Gordon; what are you afraid of?"

"Well, you know, Bobby, I want to serve you; the day you got into that other fuss I rode all the way out here to tell your folks, and get Mr. Sidney to stand your friend; you know that. I was determined to stand by you. I rode in town that very night, and went to the squire's where they had you locked up, on purpose to tell you what I'd done; but you had cut. This shows you how I felt to you!"

Gordon paused for a moment, and snuffed with his fingers the slim tallow-candle which the gaoler had left on an old tacked table near which the boy stood. Bobby said nothing, and Gordon resumed. "I am a friend of yours, I am by _____. But one good turn deserves another; you see I can quit the village and not appear; then, what the devil will be the proof against you—don't you mark it? This counterfitting business is penitentiary for ten years. Ten years! I'd die first; ten years—little more to eat than bread and water—worked to death; shut up between four walls; no races; no pleasure of any kind; not allowed to see your nearest and dearest relatives. I'm your friend, Bob Gammen, and I'd save you—I would, on my soul; but you must help me if I help you."

"How can I help you—say it out!" exclaimed Bobby.

"Well, you see I'm your friend—and your cousin Peggy, I am her friend. She's alone, now your granny's dead; she'll have nobody to take care of her—if you go to the penitentiary, she will no doubt feel herself disgraced and quit the country—turn out, God knows what; and perhaps you'll never see her again. You see I tell you truth, plain truth; may I be blasted if I don't deal with you like brother with brother. Peggy once as much as promised to marry me, but those lying tales that's told round put the devil in her against me—she don't think that I may be accused of things and be innocent as you are—you're into a worse fix than ever I was, and I should be sorry if she should believe ill against you. To come to the point, this is the thing—you send for her to-morrow and tell her what I have said—point to her what a lonely condition she is in, and that nobody can save you but me. Paint it all to her and tell—you can persuade her—to marry me."

"Jack Gordon," said Bobby firmly, "I'd see my cousin Peggy dead, stone dead, beside my old granny, and rot in the penitentiary, before I'd do that."

"You would, hey?" inquired Gordon through his clenched teeth.

"I would," rejoined Bobby, turning away from him.

"Then you shall rot there," muttered Gordon, as he passed out of the room, and closed the door after him. "I can't get much out of him," said Gordon to the gaoler, as that worthy proceeded to let him out of the prison. "He's a ram one—he'll die with his shoes on."

As the door closed on Gordon, he stepped out in front of the gaol from which the crowd had dispersed, and eyed the building, as if he would scrutinize its power of detaining the unfortunate lad. Then, with a lowering brow, he turned away, and walked quickly through the village.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER aunt Agnes shut the door on Gordon, she went to the bed and composed decently the body of the deceased.

"Child," said Agnes, "your grandmother could hardly have lived over night, but the sight of that man, Gordon, on such a message, was too much for her. But be not cast down. Come to me, child, and kneel by the bed-side, and let us pray for strength to endure the ills of life and resignation to our fate, whatever it may be, for we are in the hands of a just and merciful God."

So speaking, the old woman knelt down with Peggy by her side, and prayed fervently and

long, and particularly for the orphans, who were now left to their own guidance on the cold charity of the world.

After praying, she arose from her knees, and said to Peggy—

“Now, child, do you go up stairs and lie down on your cousin’s bed—I’ll watch by your grandmother, and in the morning you can go to the village and have everything arranged.”

“Mercy!” said Peggy, as she observed the candle flickering in the socket; “that’s all the light there is in the house.”

“No matter, child; God’s eye is on us in darkness as well as in light. Come, compose yourself; go to rest, child.”

“Not for the world I wouldn’t go to bed,” said Peggy; “no, I must muster courage, and go up to Holly, and tell the folks about poor Bobby’s misfortune and Granny’s death—alone, we’re all alone now, and I must do what I can by Bobby.”

“That is a proper sentiment, Peggy: as go, child. You think the wind sounds mournfully, but it’s all in your own feelings: the stars are bright,” continued the old woman, rising, and looking out of the door, “and though the clouds away off to the west seem to threaten a change, it won’t be before midnight: so—mayhap you’d better go up to Mr Fitzhurst’s, and tell them what has happened, and bring some of the servants with you to help me. Don’t forget the candles, child.”

After hesitating for a moment, by a strong mental effort Peggy gathered her cloak around her, and started on her melancholy errand. She glanced fearfully over the common as she closed the door, and made a wide circuit, to avoid passing near the clump of trees that stood about twenty yards from the house, in the direction of Holly. After she had gone some ten or more steps beyond the trees, she heard footsteps distinctly behind her. She stopped for a moment, irresolute whether she should fly back to the cabin, or exert her utmost speed towards Holly.

“Why should I be frightened?” she said to herself. “If it is Gordon, he dare not harm me; and why should it be him?” As she reflected, she summoned resolution to look behind, and distinctly saw the figure of a man approaching her. She determined to move forward, as if she had no suspicions; but the next moment, as the foot-fall became more distinct, she started on with the speed and fear of a frightened deer. As she ran it was evident that the person behind was following her, for he sprang after her at his utmost speed. Uttering a scream, that startled the silence of the night in fascinated terror, Peggy turned her head, to satisfy herself who her pursuer was, and as she did so, she ran with her whole force against a tree that stood directly in her path. It was a minute before she knew where she was, such was the stunning effects produced. When she recovered, she found Gordon standing by her side.

“Why should you run away from me, Peggy?” said Gordon, in an insinuating tone.

“Mr Gordon, are you going to haunt me for ever, like an evil spirit?”

“For ever, Peggy, till I gain your love.”

Peggy made no answer, but attempted to move away.

“Stop; you must hear me, Peggy,” said Gordon, sternly detaining her. “The word, mind you, is must now. If I am your enemy, mark it, you compel me; but, until you do, in spite of everything, I’m your friend.”

“Friend! John Gordon, leave me. I’ve told you again and again I’ve done with you. Friend! and my poor dead granny’s words ringing in my ears. John Gordon, God’s curse is on you. I don’t scorn or hate you any more—I pity you from the bottom of my heart. Bobby and I are orphans now, alone, all alone; but our cause is in His hands who protects the fatherless. I don’t need your friendship—I don’t care for your enmity. Go your ways, and may God forgive you.”

When Peggy first started from the cabin, the presentiment that she should meet Gordon unawares; but when she recovered from the effects of running against the tree, and found Gordon by her side, in an instant the solemn scene she had witnessed, and the earnest prayer for herself that Agnes had offered up by the body of her grandmother, arose to her mind, and gave it a tone and character, such as she had never displayed before. This new impulse evidently had an effect on Gordon; for she moved on, and, without attempting to withhold her, he walked beside her. His passions, however, soon resumed their sway.

"Joe Peggy," said Gordon, and he stopped before, and facing, prevented her advancing, "I was not born in the woods to be scared by an owl. My mind's made up. I come to you from your cousin Bobby."

"From Bobby! where is he?" exclaimed Peggy, in an anxious tone, no longer trying to pass on.—"In gaol, Peggy groaned down."

"Merciful Father!"

"Yes; I've just left him there, ironed down in an infernal dark dungeon, where there are rats and vermin enough to make short work of him. I tried to talk the gaoler into putting him into a better room, but it wouldn't do; they think Bobby's too hard a case."

"My God! John Gordon, this is your fault."

"My fault! your fault, Peggy; you drove me to desperation. I would have gone myself to gaol before a hair of Bobby's head should have been touched if it hadn't been for you. He didn't deny passing the money on me. I would have screamed him if I could. But what reason had I for doing it? Think how he treated me, how you treated me, see how your grandmother was turned against me, as if I had been the cause of Bobby's fall at the races, of his keeping a booth there—it's that old negro Pompey's fault, or of that counterfeiting business in town. No; I would have saved him—I can save him."

"How, how? I'll bless you for ever if you will."

"Suppose I quit the country, and don't appear against him, what proof have they?"

"Will you, will you!" exclaimed Peggy; "he's no counterfeiter, I know he's not; but somehow things are so against him. Oh! will you leave the country, Mr Gordon?"

"If you go with me, Peggy."

Peggy's head drooped upon her breast, and her hands fell to her sides as if she had been struck a violent blow.

"Hear me, Peggy; I came from Bobby himself. He got on his knees to me in his dungeon, and begged me, in a voice that would move the stones, to save him. You saw how he was overcome when he left the cabin in custody; he couldn't say one word. He'll go distracted, I am afraid. I told him there was no way of saving him but by my flying the country, and that I wouldn't do unless you went with me. I have money enough, Peggy, to go to the farthest end of the earth; you shall want for nothing; I'll be kind to you, I will; you think me rough, but I'll reform; I'll be all you wish me, and we'll send for your cousin Bobby, and he shall come and live with us. He never can lift up his head here again if he comes out, so he must come to us—he will come to us. Say, Peggy; say you'll go with me; come now to the village; I have a horse and gig there now; in an hour we'll be in the city. We'll be married there, and Bobby will be safe. I've money enough; you heard Bobby say what I bought at his booth I paid for in silver. No, I touch no notes now-a-days, when to touch 'em is to lose one's character. Come, go with me, and Bobby will be safe; if he's ruined, sent to the penitentiary, or dies in gaol, it will be all your fault."

Gordon felt plainly that his words had produced a strong impression on Peggy. She muttered to herself, unconscious of his presence, "Cheerfully I would lay down my life to save him."—"Lay down your life! There is no laying down your life about it; come," and he took her hand to lead her towards the village.

"John Gordon," said Peggy, folding her arms, and standing firmly, "not now; I will not go with you now to village or to city. My grandmother lies dead, and aunt Agnes is alone with her; she must be decently buried—I must be there—I will be there. But if you can save Bobby, if you have had nothing to do with harming him, and if you will save him—I—I will marry you."

"I to do with harming him! what puts that into your head? Aint I here to save him? Why not marry me now? Come to the village then, and go before the squire, and I'll swear to you I'll save him."

"Now! not now," said Peggy, with immovable firmness; "not now, unless you could put breath in my poor granny as well as save Bobby; she must be decently buried, and I must be there. Oh! Mr Gordon, if you say you mean to be kind to me, in mercy leave me now, and let me do my errand. Aunt Agnes wonders now what keeps me, and there's poor granny lying dead, and I'm talking about marrying! But I will (and she spoke this rather to herself than to Gordon) save Bobby, come what will of it."

"Give me your hand, then," said Gordon with an eager exclamation, which he could not conceal, "and swear to me that you will marry me."

"I've said it, John Gordon, and upon those conditions I'll keep my word; now leave me!" Gordon attempted to kiss her; but Peggy pushed him aside, and hastened on her way. Gordon stood as if he wished to follow Peggy, but feared the effect upon his plane.

"I've got her," he said; "I've got the true hold on her at last. I mean to be kind to her too; be sure I shall be kind to her; there's not a devil in hell shall have a happier time of it. She loves that cousin Bobby, and therefore I hate him. No! he'll be coming some of his Joe Hitt pranks over me if I save him. I'll save him safe in the penitentiary. If I had got the hussey to the city—she was near consenting. Ha! I must be after her; what a fool I am; she will see her cousin in the morning, and I will be blown." As Gordon thus thought, he advanced upon Peggy's path. "No, it's too late," he resumed; "she's off. Well, I must use fair words. Early in the morning I'll contrive to see her, and take some message from cousin Bobby; that will keep her until I fix the matter. Ha, ha! to get her consent within the sight of the cabin, and that old dead hag's curse ringing in my ears!"

With this righteous reflection Gordon turned once more towards Springdale; taking care, however, from the influence of a superstitious dread which he could not overcome, to make a wide path to avoid passing near the cabin where the dead body of granay Gammon lay.

CHAPTER IV.

THE morning after the interview in the library with Fanny, which had been interrupted by the entrance of Bradley, in a wayward mood Pinckney arose early before the rest of the company, and proceeded to town. He rode slowly into the city, pausing on a neighbouring hill that descended to it, to moralize, with a touch of sadness, upon the busy haunts of men.

Arrived at Langdale's, he entered the parlour, and was somewhat surprised to see, at the far end, a magnificently dressed lady in possession of the room. She turned as he advanced. When he beheld her features he started back, without the power of uttering a word, so great seemed his amazement. The lady was the first to speak. She arose, and with apparent tremulous delight, advancing, with both hands extended:

"O! Howard, I am delighted to see you." Pinckney drew himself up, but in an instant changed his manner, though he said, in a cold tone, and with a profound bow, as he took her hand:—

"Miss Clara Atherton, this is an unexpected pleasure."

"Howard, I hope it is none the less," she replied, with a most insinuating smile, "for being unexpected."

"None the less," replied Pinckney, forcing himself to have manner; "but when and where came you, and how came I to find you here?"

"Perhaps I have followed a recreant knight."

"I hope he is not irrecoverable," said Pinckney.

"He is a recreant, indeed, if he be; unworthy to wear fair lady's favour again. But, as I am, Howard, you behold the truth of your favourite's saying:—

"Truth is strange, stranger than fiction."

I came with my uncle to this city, meaning to travel through the United States, and—last night on our arrival we chanced to be introduced to Mr Langdale—it was mere chance, and, in their conversation they discovered that they were forty-second cousins, or some such a kin, and here we are partaking of Mr Langdale's hospitality. I rejoice, indeed, that we have met him. He has just gone out; we have been talking about you. I told him that I had met you on the continent."

"What else did you tell him?" asked Pinckney, quickly, and in confusion.

"Nothing else, Howard. I found my name had not been mentioned to him, though, to say truth, I supposed I had been alluded to in conversations which I gathered had passed between you."

Pinckney thought (it certainly did not so appear) that Miss Atherton's tone and manner implied her belief in her sex's power, and particularly of her own in the premises.

"Yes," said Pinckney, "I spoke of him of the past as the master of the day's long gone; I was a cold commentator on what can return no more."

This remark seemed fraught with the frankness of truth; and yet it was a bold speech for a man to make to a woman—and such a woman—whom he had once loved. Her beauty was overpowering, it struck you like a glorious thought that all at once flashes convictions on you of the truth of what you had deemed wildest romance. There was a pervading spirit of grace and beauty in face and form, in every tone, look, attitude, and movement, that won you by its particular spell. The combination had, indeed, made a splendid woman. There was a languor and softness in her manner that made you think, at first, that there was a want of spirit in her character; but it was like the rosy cloud, that darkens as the tempest gathers, and which, when the elementary strife is fiercest, sends forth the hottest bolt. Her hair was of a wavy blackness, and her brow as fair and polished as the sculptured forms of the clime she had left. The full dark eye beneath it would account for the "mighty ills that have been done by woman." While it indled and melted, the mouth seemed in voluptuous repose, as if it left to the brighter feature the expression of intellectual power, and reserved itself for the emotions of a heart all tenderness; but the moment that she spoke her lips assumed a higher cast, and the delicate tracery of their muscles appeared adapted to the thought by a power beyond the artist's art, the unbidden power of nature. She appeared all sensibility, all softness, and full of womanly trust, when winning an influence in your heart; and even when she had won it, and was exerting it, unless powerfully wrought upon, she seldom betrayed any other feelings. If artful, hers was a fearful artfulness; it was as though the dove had retained all its apparent innocence, and obtained the serpent's power to fascinate and destroy.

"Howard, what mean you?" she asked in a tone of silvery softness.

"Nothing—if you meant nothing."

"I mean! explain yourself, Howard! How your manner has changed."

"And how you have changed; or rather, I am gifted with vision, but I have been blind; but—enough; let these changes be as though now had ever been. What kind of a voyage had you, Miss Atherton? I thought, when I addressed you by that name, that you would have corrected me, and instructed me to use another, and a more matronly one."

"No, Howard, I am not changed in either name or nature; and I believe you are aware of what my matronly name was to have been?"

"What one of your matronly names was to have been," said Pinckney, and whatever of disagreeable feeling had heretofore possessed him appeared to pass away, for a smile of humour, tinged with a little of the consciousness that he deserved to be laughed at, passed over his face.

A slight gathering of herself up, as if she were collecting her feelings, would have betrayed to the observer that the lady was not agreeably impressed by the last remark, and the smile that accompanied it. She said:

"What a wayward creature you are, Howard. The greater sacrifices that are made to you, the more you require them. Let us understand each other, Howard. I have made a long voyage for the purpose. Your manner was so freezingly cold that I have scarcely yet recovered myself."

"Ah! is that it?" said Pinckney; "so you are all unaltered. Well, I confess to some changes. I have recovered myself. But as you have made so long a voyage, do tell me what has happened since I left you the affianced bride of the Honourable Mr Ashley?"

"As you thought, Howard—as your moody fits made you think, which misinterpreted everything between us. No; Mr Ashley was an accomplished gentleman, long descended, and nobly, and—"

"What has become of him?" interrupted Pinckney, "if you please, Miss Atherton."

"He is dead," she replied.

"Dead! of what disease?"

"He died in a duel with an American gentleman. They quarrelled concerning the ownership of a picture, which each, in dealing with a crafty Italian, considered he had bought."

"No matter, Miss Atherton," said Pinckney again, speaking in an unexcited tone; "I

confess myself unobliged of knowing anything more of your private affairs; since I know that death prevented your being Mrs Ashley. How long will you remain in town?" he continued, rising as he spoke, for they had both taken seats during their conversation. "I shall certainly see you again, I hope?"

"We part not thus, Howard," said Miss Atherton, rising; "these moody humours that you fall into will destroy, some of these days, your brightest prospects—your dearest hopes. Hear me: I have made frank confessions to you; confessions which I told you, at the time that you extorted them, would sink me in your esteem, though they were such as should have elevated me. This must not be between us. We were both too high-tempered when I last saw you. We forgot the position in which we stood to each other. I know my conduct requires explanation, and I wish to make it. Why, Howard, there is no romance about it; such things between attached persons happen frequently. It is the course of the true love, the wayward currents of which the poet has described. We were affianced. Well, I own, Howard, that with something of a woman's fondness for her own will and ways, that sometimes, when you came to see me, I denied myself. Mr Ashley might have been with me, or he might not—it did not depend upon his presence or absence. Report at last changed its rumours—you know what an idle thing it is—and ceased giving me to you to make me Mrs Ashley. You returned to Venice after an absence of a few weeks, you remember, and found this rumour ripe. Well, upon the instant, without the reflection of an instant, you dashed into my apartments, and demanded an immediate explanation. Howard, I have never been celebrated for any spirit, that I know of, except a spirit of endurance; but feeling as I did towards you—having given such unrestrained confidence—my pride, my woman's dignity, arose. I repelled, I own, in high-wrought anger, your reproaches. I returned scorn for scorn. I bid you go; but how could you mind an excited woman under such circumstances?"

"Excuse me, but all this is truth, Miss Atherton. You assure me there was no breaking of promises, vows plighted and sworn to me, for the long descended, little expecting, the eminently wealthy, the all-accomplished—the Honourable Mr Ashley."

"No, Howard, there was not; be seated," she resumed, as Pinckney stepped to the window. "How unreasonable you are. Do you not believe me?"

"Miss Atherton," said Pinckney, turning round to her from the window through which he had been gazing in stern abstraction, "I will take an early opportunity of again seeing you. We shall meet at dinner, perhaps. Matters of great interest to me require my absence now."

"Well, Howard," she said, offering her hand to him as she spoke, "we shall meet at dinner, then. I have said nothing to Mr Langdale about our acquaintance, only that we were casually acquainted. Say nothing to him yourself on the subject at present. You're in a moody, Byronic way, again—plague take my lord of poets, for the fancies he has engendered in young gentlemen's brains," she continued playfully; "but we'll meet soon again: now do not make it long, Howard; it must be long, though." And they shook hands and parted.

On leaving Langdale's, Pinckney instantly mounted his horse, and took the road to Holly.

"So beautiful and so false," said he, as his horse bore him through the city; "she knows not what I know. Ashley told me himself of their engagement, showed me the letters that had passed between them; her letters, stereotypes of her's to me. It won't do; the chain is broken; Ashley is no more, and now she would return to me. What a woman, and what a difference between such and Fanny Fitzhurst! No; my hopes are fixed there now, with a certainty they could ever have been fixed elsewhere. Strange that I should have felt but scorn, in Miss Atherton's presence, for one so fair, and but pity when I left her! How utterly false I have found her—let the past go to the winds. I shall meet Mr Bradley at Holly as close to Fanny's side as though his claims were undoubted. Well; she must decide my fate the first opportunity."

Turning such reflections over and over in his mind, as Pinckney left the precincts of the city he put spurs to his horse, and soon arrived in the vicinity of Holly, where he beheld Bradley emerging from the woods with his gun in his hand. As Pinckney passed him, they bowed with studied courtesy to each other, and Pinckney hastened on, hoping to find a

fit opportunity of seeing Fanny alone. It was presented to him; for on entering the hall he met her, and in an anxious tone, said:

"Miss Fitzhurst, do allow me one word—will you not take my arm; and let us pass into the library?"

Fanny, without answering, timidly took his arm, and they entered. An hour after Pinckney repaired to his room with a radiant brow. As he crossed the hall, he encountered Bradley, who had just returned.

"I hope you had luck in hunting, Mr Bradley?" said he, in a joyous tone.

"Only tolerable," replied Bradley, throwing a suspicious side-glance on the inquirer; "did Miss Fitzhurst go to Mr Elwood's?"

"I believe not, sir; my impression is that she has deferred her visit until to-morrow."

So speaking, Pinckney bowed, and retired to his chamber.

CHAPTER V.

On the morrow the splendid equipage of Mr Langdale drove up to Helly. He paid his respects to its inmates with the easy and graceful courtesy which marked all his actions.

"Miss Fanny Fitzhurst," said he, "I have come to beg a favour of you."

"'Tis granted: what is it, Mr Langdale?"

"Ah, you tempt me to make a request, which I know would make you break your word. Remember, I'm a bachelor; you smile; not so old either. I have a newly discovered relative, who has just arrived in this country from England; may I ask that you will do me the honour of calling on her."

"With great pleasure, sir; I will make a visit to town to-morrow for the very purpose. What is the name of your relative? Is she married or single?"

"You are extremely kind, Miss Fitzhurst; Atherton is her name; she is a splendid woman, is she not, Pinckney?"

"She is, indeed, sir," replied Pinckney.

"Yet I hesitated to ask you the question," rejoined Langdale; "for when you visited me yesterday, you found her all alone, and stayed but a few minutes, and went—where? I pray you."

"Directly thither," replied Pinckney, bowing to Fanny, who blushed, while a rosy tint flushed her very forehead.

"I expected as much, Miss Fitzhurst," said Langdale, addressing the lady; "this young friend of mine, during a fever, the result of his wounds, talked wildly in his sleep, and as I was watching by him, I became unconsciously the depository of certain of his secrets."

Fanny blushed again, and after a moment's pause, asked:

"What connection is Miss Atherton of yours, Mr Langdale?"

"Something like a second or third cousin. We have not yet traced the connection exactly; her uncle is a gentleman of the old school, and devotedly attached to her. You did not meet him, I believe, Howard?"

"No, sir; he was, my impression is, absent in England when I met Miss Atherton on the continent. He is an American, and a southerner. I know their connections south."

"Well," said Langdale, with enthusiasm, "she is almost that rare bird—a perfect beauty. What a full, flashing eye she has—what a graceful form;—and mind—has she not mind, Howard?—is she not bewitching?"

"Yea; she is, indeed," said Pinckney, with a peculiar smile. "Take care, Langdale."

"I must, if I hope to keep my bachelor vow."

"Why should you keep it?" said Fanny, gaily. "It is a matter of town-wonder that you do not marry, and here is a beautiful bird flown into your very cage."

"True, true; my time has come. What say you, Howard, to my choice?"

"A most excellent one, Mr Langdale, to get a wife. Would she suit you?"

"Would she not? how old is she?"

"We must not speculate upon a lady's age, Langdale," rejoined Pinckney.

Langdale stayed to dinner; he was every now and then, whatever was the topic of con-

versation, quoting Miss Atherton, or alluding to her beauty, and the prize he had found in her relationship. Pinckney could not but smile while he watched him. He listened to his remarks with even more than his usual interest.

The evening found Langdale in high spirits by the side of Miss Atherton.

" You have been absent long," said the lady, throwing the lustre of her dark eye on him as he took a seat beside her.

" I have been to the country residence of Mr Fitzhurst, where my friend Pinckney has been spending some time. Miss Fitzhurst will call to see you to-morrow. Pinckney used to tell me of an Italian lady who had stolen his heart, and I suspect made off with it without any return. I replied he was not incurable, and I find I have been a prophet."

" How so? do tell me."

" Miss Fitzhurst has caught him completely; and, if I have any sagacity, he has caught her. They'll make a noble pair; saving your fair presence, coz, I know no one personally, or mentally, her superior."

" Ay, is she so beautiful?"

Yes, indeed, she is; I rallied Pinckney for leaving town so quickly yesterday, and with a profound bow to the lady, he confessed the cause."

" Indeed!"

" Yes, indeed! how you echo me. Don't you think him a man to please a woman?"

" Perhaps to please a very young one, but he seems, does he not, as Master Stephen has it in ' Every Man in his Humour,' to be given up to most gentlemanly melancholy?"

" He has strong energies, and they are inactive—that's all. He would be much happier if he were without fortune, and struggling in the up-hill for fame and wealth. Yes, he sometimes gets a fit of this gentlemanly melancholy; but I don't believe the Italian lady had much to do with it. He describes her as a splendid woman, and no doubt she was; but utterly worldly (according to my notions), and one who would have made him happy for a month, and miserable for the rest of his life. She, I suspect, was older than himself. No! such a lady as Miss Fitzhurst is the one for him. It was amusing to observe how all regret of this fair Italian faded away from his mind, turned to pitying contempt almost, as his intimacy with Miss Fitzhurst increased. In fact, I suspect that the Italian had rather piqued his vanity than wounded his heart; and from his personal appearance, address, and fortune, I take it, his vanity has not been used to many wounds. Pshaw! it was all stuff; a youthful traveller's dream of some 'old beauty' of the old world, such as those of the theatre—all point, furbelow, florence, folly, flatter, and fury, from which he awoke in the new world with a brain made reasonable to meet a new, and youthful beauty, with feelings fresh as the rose-clad forest fountain of her native land, the bubbles of which nought but the bird's beak ever broke in the unbroken wilderness—he awoke here to realize the truth of love. I admire Pinckney—I love him; I know no young man I respect half so much. When you see Miss Fitzhurst, you will agree with me that they are just suited to each other. How romantically I have been holding forth! Alas! for us bachelors; if they are to be married I trust it will be soon, fair coz."

" To write, to sigh, and to converse—
For years to play the fool,
Is to put passion out to nurse,
And send one's heart to school."

" Have you understood that they were soon to be married?" asked Miss Atherton, looking up from her slipper, which she had been observing as Langdale spoke.

" I have not; but I doubtless suppose that they will be soon. Her family certainly will be highly gratified by the event. Ha, ha! Pinckney wished to make me believe that there must be a long interval for the heart to recover itself—a long dark night, as he expressed it, between the sitting of our first love and rising of the second—a passionless period. Why, this first love of his, if it was first love, went plump down in the wide ocean, without creating the least stir on its bosom, except, perhaps, the light rippling of vanity and pique. It went down as Shakspeare describes the golden set of the sun, which argues a goodly day to-morrow."

CHAPTER VI.

GORDON's machinations against Peggy had so far failed. On her arrival at Holly she told Miss Rachellina, as distinctly as her tears and heavy sobs would permit, of the death of her grandmother, and the accusation of Bobby.

The good lady expressed deep feeling for the situation of her unfortunate protégé; she said:

"It's alarming, child, to think of the many fearful situations in which your cousin gets himself placed. My brother has done everything for him that he could; he was bailed by Sidney in a large sum for shooting at Joseph Hitt with intent to kill, and it was my family's influence which saved him from the consequences, as they told Hitt it would be foolish for him to pursue the business any farther, and he dropped it. But, child, I know not what to say to this accusation of counterfeiting. My brother is now in bed, where he has been taking laudanum to ease the pain of his gout. I cannot disturb him; Sidney is away, and will be gone for some days. However, on to-morrow I will speak to my brother, and let him decide what can be done for Bobby. It is fearful to think of his situation. But, child, you must take some of the servants with you, and assist Agnes with the body of your grandmother; she can be buried to-morrow evening; everything necessary shall be provided, child; and you must come here and make this your home. Do not cry so, child. Stay, child, stay till I go and give orders."

Mr Fitzhurst was so tormented with the gout that he had not feeling or patience to attend to anybody's ills but his own, or maybe he thought it was best to let Bobby remain in gaol without bail as a lesson to him, for he knew not how to reconcile the frequent accusations against the boy with the idea of his entire innocence. The day after her death granny Gammon was buried. A large concourse attended the funeral, and among the number Miss Rachellina and her niece. The old woman belonged to the Methodist church, and it was decided by its members that she should be buried in their grave-yard, which lay on the other side of the village of Springdale. The gaol in which Bobby was confined stood about the centre of Springdale, immediately opposite to the court-house, as is the custom in many of the villages of the United States. It was a rough, two-story stone building, with thick walls, and very small, heavy, grated windows. A wall was partly built around it, but its completion was delayed in consequence of the present want of funds, or some disagreement among the county commissioners. Bobby was confined in a left-hand room of the gaol as you faced it, and his window through the unfinished wall commanded a view of the street of the village on that side by which the procession was to pass. Bobby was standing by his grated window intensely gazing forth, and Pompey had placed himself on a pile of stones beneath it, and with his hand on one of the bars, was doing his utmost to comfort the prisoner, when the funeral procession came mournfully winding along, passing close to the gaol wall.—"There Pompey, look there," said Bobby, with a bursting heart; "that's my fault; just when they accused me of it granny died; she couldn't stand it. She always said I'd be the death of her."

"No, Mister Bobby," said Pompey, looking through the thick gates with deep sympathy, "it warn't your fault at all; how often must I tell you that? It was in the course of nature; and if it warn't in the course of nature, it was Jack Gordon's fault, and he done the whole of this; but who minds what a coloured person says?"

On beholding his cousin Peggy in deep black, walking close to the hearse and sobbing so loud that he could hear her where he stood, he could gaze no longer, but turning away, placed his hands to his ears, and threw himself on the floor of his prison-house in speechless despair.

After the funeral, Peggy was allowed to have an interview with her cousin Bobby, in which, on her telling Bobby that she had made up her mind to marry Gordon and save him, that individual's duplicity was brought to light. Bobby insisted upon it that Gordon's object was to deceive her as well as himself, and obtain her promise that she would drop the idea of trying to save him in that way, as it would ruin them both. After this Peggy kept close to Holly unless when she went to see Bobby, at which times she was accompanied by some one or other; and therefore Gordon, though constantly on the watch, had no opportunity of seeing her.

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As Squire Norris observed when he committed Bobby, the "county court was sitting, and he'd have a quick trial"—it appeared that such was to be the fact; for the day after his grandmother's funeral the grand jury found a bill against him for passing counterfeit money. The day of trial soon arrived, but the cause did not come on until late in the afternoon. As Sidney was away, and Mr Fitzhurst, senior, could not attend, Pinckney, moved by his own impulses, and requested by the family, had procured the best counsel the city afforded, and anxious for Bobby's fate, repaired to the court.

The prosecutor was a good-hearted, red-nosed practitioner, who was decidedly opposed to the court's sitting after dinner, which this court was in the habit of doing. Feed by Gordon to assist in the prosecution, but appearing merely as a volunteer to aid the prosecutor in his arduous duties, Mr Lupton took his seat by the legal minister of the state. A large, impatient crowd were collected round and in the court, where they had been all day. There were many persons, too, before the gaol, keenly desirous of getting a good look at the prisoner. The whole countryside had been ringing with the awfulness of Bobby's many enormities; and the gaping bumpkins were there to gaze upon the youthful moral monstrosity, who had such skill in counterfeiting, and who had passed off so many hundred spurious bills on the harmless country people.

"Yes," said one fellow, standing amidst a group before the gaol door awaiting the forthcoming of Bobby, "I expect he'll take the full term—and it's right; a man what can't boast of much learning like myself is constantly taken in by these 'ere chaps what lives on community. Just the last market day I took a two dollar counterfeit bill, and swallowed up all my earthly profits that day—sir, at the races I bet a chap a dollar, an' won, an' it turned out counterfeit; an' ecause I tried to pass it, I got threatened."

"Did you know it was counterfeit?" asked one of the party.

"Know it?" was the reply; "how should I know it, when I tell you I've got no learning no how. Two chaps said it was a counterfeit, I know, an' I just tried to pass her to find out. Egad, I think this chap ought to be hung up till he ware dead, as a sample to the country."

"There's my 'pinions," said another, while the last speaker looked about him like a stamp-ovator when he thinks he has made a hit.

In the meantime, Bobby, who was the only prisoner within the gaol, except one who was confined in another apartment on a charge of assault and battery, was doing all he could to cheer his cousin Peggy, who had been admitted to his place of confinement with a suit of new clothes, which she herself had rapidly and with fearful anxieties made for him, that he might appear as respectable as possible on his trial. It was an ominous suit of black, in respect to their grandmother. Peggy held one of Bobby's hands in her's, while with the other she was adjusting the collar of his jacket. The tears were streaming down her cheeks, and the deep black in which she was dressed, together with the sorrow she had lately suffered, and the dark room in which she stood, had made an alteration in her appearance that struck like a dagger to the heart of Bobby. His appearance made a similar impression upon her; he looked haggard in the extreme, but his deportment was heroically firm for one of his years.

"Cousin Peggy," he said, "I am innocent of all this—I am, as God's my judge. So sure as granny's dead and in her grave, so sure I am innocent of all this. Aunty Agnes has been here to talk to me, an' I'm trusting in God. Let what may come of it, it's better for me, for I have not been living the life I ought to—I know it—I know it. Don't be down-hearted, cousin Peggy, it's not a hanging matter."

"Oh! Bobby, Bobby! but it's a disgrace," exclaimed Peggy, throwing her arms around his neck; "you musn't think hard of me for saying so. I don't mean to throw it up to you, I know you're not guilty. My, my! I came here to comfort you, and you comfort me. But we'll die before we see each other again, Bobby, if they send you to that awful place. Oh! if you only get through this, I'll love you all my life, an' none but you, an' I'll never look at such a wretch as Gordon again. Bobby, listen—just say so—and I'll go out an' get Gordon to hurry away; I saw him as I came here, and he wanted to speak to me, but I wouldn't—just say so, and I'll see him and mar——"

"No, cousin Peggy, I wouldn't say so to save my life," said Bobby—"an' I said that before."

At this instant the sheriff entered, and told Bobby that it was time for him to appear in court. Escorted by the officer, and with his cousin Peggy walking by his side and holding his hand firmly locked in hers, Bobby left the gaol. The first person whose eye Bobby caught as he stepped from the gaol door was old Pompey, who had obtained leave from his master to attend the trial, and who appeared, by way of keeping Bobby in countenance, in his full livery suit. The sheriff was a kind-hearted man, and knowing the friendly offices which Bobby had performed for Pompey, he was pleased to see the display of gratitude which the old negro had evinced during the boy's confinement, and therefore made room for him as he advanced to the side of Bobby.

"Your humble, 'bedient servant, master sheriff,'" said Pompey to the officer with profound awe, as he stepped up. "Master Bobby," he whispered in great agitation, "keep your heart up; you got a big heart, you ha' indeed. You got old Pompey out of as tough a job almost as this—and if the Lord of his 'finite mercy would put a white skin on me now, I'd save you—but what's the testimony of a coloured person!"

"Look at that," said one of the crowd to another; "folks say that black rascal went halves in that very booth at the races where this money was passed. I don't think the sheriff ought to allow that."

"Allow that," said another person, who was no other than Hardy the miller; "I tell you, stranger, I know Bobby Gammon, and I'd sooner take you for a counterfeiter than I would him; an' for the matter of that, before I would the old negro either."

The stranger eyed the stout form of the miller, and said no more, while Hardy stepped up to Peggy, and assisted her across the street.

"There, mother, that's what I always told you Bob and Peg Blossom would come to," said Miss Maddox to her mother, as she stood at her shop-door, and congratulated herself on being a prophetess.

The prisoner was placed in the bar, near which the prosecutor and Mr Lupton had been some time seated in deep consultation. The sheriff kindly placed a chair by the prisoner's box, and bid Peggy be seated; she did so, she looked round and beheld Gordon gazing at her with a mingled expression, in which she thought there was a touch of regret that fixed her attention for a moment—it was so unusual to his features. When he caught her eye, he nodded his head slightly sideways, as much as to bid her leave the court, as she interpreted it, and he would join her—but she turned her eye from him. In a few moments she could not resist stealing a glance at him; his head was turned towards the bench, and he stood with his arms folded in a resolute manner. As Pompey was known to most persons about the court-house, he had contrived to get within the railing that kept the crowd from intruding on the bar, where he stood partly screened by a pillar, and endeavouring to pass unobserved, but to get as near to Bobby as possible.

The bench was not very imposing in its appearance, nor remarkable for its decisions, except, perhaps, for the frequency with which they were reversed by the supreme judicature of the state; nor was this to be wondered at, when it was remembered that the judges owed their appointments, which were made by the governor and council, more to the political influence which they had exercised in behalf of the party in power than to any reputation for legal lore.

All at once, like one whom a sudden thought had aroused to his duty, the superior judge, whose dinner had been substantial and vinous, raised himself up lazily on his elbow from a laughing colloquy which he had been holding with his right-hand man, and ordered the prisoner to stand up, and listen to the indictment against him. Resolutely Bobby arose, but he did not elevate his person as much as he might have done by standing on his longer leg, for he rested on the shorter one. While the clerk was reading the indictment, Peggy watched him with the intense desire to understand the meaning of the various repetitions and many counts in it, while Pompey internally came to the conclusion, as he listened to what he could not possibly comprehend, "that the learning and big dictionary words in the paper was clear against Master Bobby."

When the clerk had read the indictment, and the question was asked of the prisoner, "What say you—guilty or not guilty?" Bobby replied in a clear tone—

“Gentlemen and judges, I don't deny as how that I bought a cow and calf from Jack Gor-

don, and that I paid him, mayhap, with bad money ; but as God is my judge, I took it for good money, and I thought it was good money when I passed it."

The eminent lawyer whom Pinckney had obtained in the city to defend Bobby, had only arrived a few minutes before the prisoner was brought into court ; the call of an extensive business had kept him at his post in the city to the latest moment. No expectation of the accumulation of professional honours had brought him to Springdale ; he came merely in the way of his profession, and in the anticipation of a large fee. When Bobby was arraigned he sat within the bar conversing with Pinckney, whom he had often met at the table of Langdale, and who was explaining to him the case as distinctly as his own limited knowledge of it would allow. Mr Mason was evidently interested in the sketch of the boy's character which Pinckney gave him, together with his adventures with Thompson when he rescued Pompey, and the shooting of Hitt ; all which the narrator had frequently heard spoken of at Holly.

" And that's his cousin beside him ? she is a beautiful girl ; her grief is certainly deep and heartfelt ; he certainly is a remarkable boy."—" Ah," continued Mason, whose quick eye comprehended matters at a glance, " that's the old negro whom he saved from the lash of Thompson. I know Thompson—a harsh dog ; the boy did the negro a favour worthy of his gratitude. Mr Pinckney, I wish I had known more of this case before—I thought it was one among the thousand ordinary cases of counterfeiting—my business obscured my gallantry ; I forgot how Miss Fitzhurst urged it upon me when I met her the other day in the city. What a thing habit is ; I believe in time we might learn to dance to the rattling of a captive's chains, and be merry at the music. Sir, when I first commenced my profession, I felt a nervous, deep interest in the fate of every criminal whom I beheld in the bar ; and now I can scarcely get excited in the fate of my own client, unless something remarkable turns up in the investigation, or a passion for victory is aroused in me by the opposing counsel."

The whole court appeared impressed with the manner in which Bobby expressed himself. The judge ordered the plea of Not Guilty to be entered, which was accordingly done, and the trial proceeded. The prosecutor made no opening remarks himself, but left that duty to Mr Lupton, who held forth for more than an hour in a tirade against counterfeiting in general, and Bobby in particular, whose depravity he pronounced unparalleled in the annals of crime. When he concluded, Gordon was called to the stand.

Pinckney puzzled over the features, and particularly the form of Gordon, in strange perplexity, for he could not remove the impression from his mind that he had seen him before, but when, or where, he could not possibly divine.

With characteristic swagger and indifference to those around him, Gordon gave in his testimony. He related the facts of the sale of the cow and calf, and the payment of the note by Bobby, as they occurred. He also, with great apparent frankness, mentioned what had transpired at the cottage on the arrest of Bobby, saying that the old woman, when dying, had accused him of misleading her grandchild, when the fact was, that he could prove by Mr Sidney Fitzhurst, if he were in court, that when Bobby was taken up in the city that he had called on Mr Fitzhurst for the purpose of getting him to defend the boy.

Here Mr Mason told Gordon to confine himself to the case before the court, and Gordon said he had nothing more to say further, except that when he left the cabin the constable showed him a tin box, containing money such as Bobby had passed on him, which was found between the logs by the door.—" How do you know it was found there ? " inquired Mr Mason.

" Because he put it there himself," shouted Pompey, springing to the side of Bobby, as if moved by an impulse that he had been trying in vain to control, and facing Gordon. The whole court were mute with amazement. " Because he put it there himself—and, gentlemen all, if God of his finite mercy would just for two minutes put a white skin on me and make me a witness, I'd swear to it, and prove it, for I saw Jack Gordon do it."

Endowed by a deep sense of gratitude with moral firmness the old negro kept his stand by Bobby, and his eye on Gordon fearlessly. Gordon started.

" Silence ! " exclaimed the judge. " Sheriff, what means this interruption ? "

Before the sheriff could get to the spot where Pompey stood to take him into custody, for county courts have not as many officers in attendance as city ones. Mr Mason arose and observed—

" May it please the court, there is something in this I would fain understand——"

" I understand it," said Lupton, springing to his feet, " that boy——"

" You must also understand, sir, that I am not to be interrupted," said Mason, with a glance on Lupton that quailed him to his seat. " Will your honours suspend the cause for a few moments while I speak to this negro in private? I feel the interest of my client demands it."

" Why, Mr Mason, if you wish it particularly," said the judge, glancing around on the bar, as if he would discover in their manner if there were any error in the proceedings. " Certainly a lawyer of your prominent standing, sir,"—Mason bowed low. " By-the-by, the counsel who opened the cause occupied us so long, and then there has been so much delay that we can't progress much farther this evening—so the court may as well adjourn. The gentlemen of the jury will take care not to hold any conversation with any person touching the cause in course of trial. Witnesses, be punctual in your attendance—crier, adjourn the court until to-morrow morning, ten o'clock."

Without waiting for the adjournment of the court, Mr Mason left the room, attended by the sheriff and Pompey.

As Pompey passed out, the negroes in attendance gazed at him with a mixture of admiration, awe, and fear. " I tell you what it are, Dave," whispered one negro to another, " Pompey Fitzhurst are an astonishing coloured person; he takes the shine everywhere."

" Yes, if he had a white skin on 'um, he'd plead law up to the handle."

Totally unconscious of the admiration he elicited, but labouring under a high-wrought excitement, Pompey followed the sheriff and Mr Mason into a private apartment.

" What's your name, my old man?" said Mr Mason to Pompey in a conciliatory tone.

" Folks, master, calls me Pompey Fitzhurst, 'cause I belong to the Fitzhurst family, and my father before me; but my father's name was Pompey Johnson, an' I was named after him."

" Well, Pompey, tell me truly what was the cause of your interrupting the court?"

" 'Cause, master, I couldn't help it, though I know a coloured person can't give testimony; I couldn't help it; for I diskivered and observed Jack Gordon with my own eyes put that tin box thar before he went into the house."

" Who did you ever tell this to before?"

" Nobody, master; I held it intirely to myself. I knew as how I couldn't be of any service to Mr Bobby, though he had done so much for me, an' I kept it to myself, 'cause I knowed if I told it I'd get myself into trouble, and it wouldn't help nobody; but in the court this day, when I seed Jack Gordon stand up thar so bold, and swear away Mister Bobby to the penitentiary, and poor Miss Peggy thar feeling so much, and Mister Bobby feeling so much, and I feeling so much, I couldn't stand it; and I spoke it, an' I would ha' spoke it if I had to die for it," said Pompey, folding his arms, while the dignity of truth was stamped as firmly on his black brow as ever it was on a white one.

" I believe you, Pompey," said Mr Mason. " Thank you, master," said Pompey, while the tear glistened in his eye, and he turned his head away and brushed his cheek. " Master," he resumed, " I just tell you the whole on it, if you'll just listen to me—an' if you'll only get Mister Bobby out of this scrape, old Pompey 'll pray for you to the last day of his life to the good God, who hearkens to the black man just the same as to the white man."

" Well, Pompey, tell me exactly everything about it, and I won't despair of getting Bobby off."

" Master, I'll just tell you the whole truth. Mister Bobby and I agreed betwixt us, that we should 'stablish a booth at the races. We put our money together, and did it, for he was mighty saving to get some things for his granny, who's dead since. Poor creature! she died the very night they went to her cabin to take Mister Bobby. I was out the door, but I heard it; she laid Mister Bobby's falling off to Jack Gordon, and she spoke an awful curse on him just as she died. Gordon hates all of 'em. He wants revenge—that's it. Miss Peggy wouldn't have him; that's it, Master Mason. But I'm not telling it straight. I had to drive our family home from the races, an' I couldn't tell how Mister Bobby was a coming on; so after I puts away my carriage, and feeds my horses, I thought I'd go down to granny Gammon's and see Mister Bobby about our booth, an' inquire how his granny was; as word was about, and he had told me at the races, as how she was ailing. Well, I went, and as I drawed

near the house, I heard a parcel of people coming, as though they were bent there too; so I didn't know what to make of it, and I bethought me that maybe the graney was dead. Howsoever on I went, fast a-head; one fellow, it was Gordon's voice—I couldn't see them, mind, master, for there were no moon, and the starlight was uncertain like, but I know Jack Gordon's voice anywhere—he called on me to stop. Just then, somehow, I mistrusted something, and I went on to make believe I was going by the house, and when I got beyond it, and behind it like, till it stood atwixt them and me, I turned quick round towards the door, and hid in some elder bushes by an old shed near by the house."

"How came you to mistrust something when you heard Jack Gordon's voice?" inquired Mr Mason.

"Cause, master, Mister Bobby had told me that he believed Jack Gordon wanted to do him some evil. Well, then, I hid in them elder bushes, and they comes up without making any noise, and all of 'em but one goes in. One chap just stood holding the door open like, and that let the light shine right out. I was as near to 'em, master, as I are to that fireplace; I saw plain; an' I saw Jack Gordon touch the man what stood in the door, an' then I saw something white shine in Jack Gordon's hand, and I diskivered and obsserved him put it plump right between the logs of the cabin by the door,—an' when he knowed that the other man seed him, he pushed right into the house."

"What did you do then?"

"Then I stayed there till they fetched Master Bobby out to take him afore Squire Norris; an' when they fetched him out, a man, and he canst ha' been the same one what hold open the door, and saw Gordon put the box between the logs, went to the place an' took out the tin box, an' be give it to somebody, and told him to mind and hold it fast, for that he believed there was counterfeit money in it; he said it shined, and that made him find it. Then Gordon came out, and wanted 'em to search the house; but they told him they had enough to do for Master Bobby, and so they dragged him off afore Squire Norris, and then to gaol; fur I followed behind 'em, and saw jist how they acted. You see, Master Mason, I diskivered Jack Gordon, and a parcel of other chaps, cutting extras 'bout our booth all day, and spending money; an' I thought things were going wrong then; cause Master Bobby got in trouble once afore about such money, an' I believe, with his graney, what's dead and gone, that it was Jack Gordon's doing."

Mr Mason mused a moment, and then observed to the sheriff.

"Sheriff, I have often remarked, in the practice of my profession, that uneducated persons, and particularly coloured people, give in their testimony with striking accuracy. I suppose this observation surprises you?"

"I never thought of it before," replied the sheriff.

"It is a fact, sir. The reason is, I suppose, because they make no parade of pertinent phraseology; they do not distract their minds by thinking what people will say of them. They tell what they saw in whatever language rises to their lips, and the unadorned truth, in homely guise, comes home to everybody. I venture to say, that if that jury were allowed tomorrow to hear this old fellow's tale, that they would acquit Bobby without leaving the box."

"I think so," rejoined the sheriff; "for my part, I never thought him guilty. I have known him for many years, and I believe that the strongest trait in his character is sterling honesty."

"You are right, I think. Where can I find this constable that arrested Bobby? Is he vigilant and faithful?"

"He is. I saw him in the court-house just now. Would you like to see him?"

"If you please."

The sheriff left the room, and in a few minutes returned with the constable.

"You arrested Robert Gammon, I believe, sir, on the charge of passing counterfeit money?" said Mr Mason to the constable, whose name was Jessop.

"I did, sir."

"Describe the circumstances, if you please, sir."

Jessop accordingly narrated them with great accuracy.

"Who was the man that discovered the box?" asked Mason.

"I bethink me," said Jessop, after a pause of deliberation, "that he a kind o' clerks it for Squire Beabow in the city; I know I have seen him about there."

"Ma' Benbow's; yes, in old town. Well, I'll give you a letter to Ross, the old Hays of our city; you know him?"

"Yes, sir; and old Hays too—they're mighty men," said Jessop, with an air of professional pride. "I know where Ross lives."

"I'll give you a letter to him—you must start forthwith; leave the village in a direction from the city so as to be unsuspected. Ross will assist you. I'll give directions in the letter; the house of this witness, wherever he lives, must be searched thoroughly. I hope there'll be some tin boxes forthcoming."

Mason wrote a hasty letter to Ross, sealed it carefully, and inquiring the name of Jessop, wrote it plainly in the corner of the direction, and made, apparently, a hasty stroke with the pen beside it, as is usual; but the mark had a cabalistic meaning, implying the trust-worthiness of the bearer.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER the court adjourned, Pinckney waited some time to see Mr Mason, with the intention of showing him some civilities; but as he was still engaged with Pompey and the constable, and there was no knowing when he would get through, Pinckney returned to Helly, which Mr Bradley had now left.

With what a confiding, yet fructuous heart, Fanny met Pinckney. How coy the blush that melted into confidence! how full the confidence that in a moment grew shy, startl'd at itself, as if it would question the fulness of its faith, and knew if the awakened world of love within were indeed a reality, or merely a dream! "Her heart was of its joy afraid." Did Pinckney, indeed, love her as he said? how thrilling the consciousness that the world must not from the lips of gentle maid tell all she felt, 'twas well—for they could not. At one time, while he sat conversing with her, her coyness would all vanish, and when he had gone, she would take herself to task for her want of maidenly reserve; at another, her timidity would overpower her, and she would think, when he had left her side, what a bashful creature she had been, and resolve to banish it, at least sufficiently to meet his eye, and reply, without faltering, to his inquiry,—

" 'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art."

But it was all evidence of the depth of her affection. The beautiful illusions of life were around her. Her heart was like the fountain that throws up its silvery spray in the air, and hope was the sunbeam that gilded it with the hues of the rainbow.

"My dearest Fanny," said Pinckney, "I have some little business in town to-night—how I hate leaving you."

"It will be dark now before you can get to town, Howard—and have you no fear of another assault upon you?"

"None in the world."

"Well, I have."

"Bless you! then I will go at once; my horse is fleet, and I can reach the city before night. I value my life now," and encircling her form gently, he pressed a kiss upon her brow and hand, and left her. He proceeded to his room, unlocked his trunk, and took from it the letters, ring, and miniature, which our readers may remember had, on a former occasion, awakened restless and bitter memories. The bitterness has gone—given place to indifference, for as he put them in the pocket of his riding coat, he said to himself—

"I should have returned them before I left Venice; I must have those foolish letters of mine. What a fascinating creature Fanny is. Her father received my proposals with real pleasure, and Miss Rachellina, what a pleased dignity and importance sat upon her maiden brow! I wish Sid were back."

So speaking, Pinckney left his room, and passing out, mounted his horse, which he had ordered to be in readiness when he entered the house; he rode off, kissing his hand to Fanny who called out to him, saying:

"O! Mr Pinckney, if you see Mr Langdale's beauty, apologise to her, or rather to him, for my not calling the day I promised him. Say father's indisposition prevented me."

He bowed in gallant obedience, spurred his horse into a brisk canter, and with a heart full of the witcheries of Fanny Fitzhurst, gave himself up to the happy dreams of the future. As he approached the place where he had been robbed, the shades of night were gathering in, and he naturally felt an impulse of watchfulness. Down the bridle-path which led to the hills near which Sidney had caught his horse, Pinckney heard the rapid clatter of a horse's hoofs. His attention was attracted; and while he still rode on at the same rate, he prepared his pocket-pistol for an emergency. Just as Pinckney reached the spot where the bridle-path met the main road, the horseman at full speed entered it. He reined back his horse as he saw Pinckney, and held down his head; but Pinckney at a glance recognised him as the leading witness against Bobby. It was Jack Gordon.

"You ride fast, sir," said Pinckney, anxious to discover something of the character of the man who had interested him, not only on Bobby's account, but he knew not why.

"Me! yes; sometimes fast, sometimes slow," replied Gordon, in a voice that was harsh and brusky in the first words, but which he subdued; at the same time he checked his horse, and again gave him the rein, so as to keep pace with Pinckney.

"How far do you ride?" asked Pinckney.

"Ride? I ride—no, not to the city. I go about a mile below—I have some business there with a friend, and as I must be back to the court to-morrow, I'm making the best of my time."

"That's a very young man to be leagued with counterfeiters, is he not?"

"Young! he's cut his eye-teeth, sir. That negro and him have colleagueed together for years. Damn me! that black rascal ought to be strung up neck and heels. Did you ever hear of such a thing in a free country as to let a slave speak that way of a white man? I'll swear he's paid for it. I'd give a thousand dollars for him; I'd put his carcase in a condition for the crows. What Thompson was going to give him would ha' been only a priming. They can't save Bob Gammon—he's got to go."

"You seem to have a stout heart in the cause, sir," replied Pinckney. "Have I not seen you before?"

Gordon thrust his hand in his pocket, and reined back his horse so quickly that the animal was thrown on his haunches. This surprised Pinckney, and he stopped his horse, and faced Gordon. "Ha, ha!" said Gordon, with an attempt at facetiousness, and apparently changing his purpose, "I have the luck of it. Maybe you're like old Pompey, Mr Pinckney; you saw me do what never entered my head?"

Pinckney's suspicions of Gordon's character were aroused. He said sternly, but certainly imprudently, "Maybe I have, and remember my testimony is good." And without noticing him any further, Pinckney rode on. Tremblingly Gordon's hand went again to his pocket; there it remained, and he sat motionless on his horse while Pinckney pursued his way.

Pinckney had not ridden a hundred yards from the spot where he left Gordon before he heard him start again at the top of his speed. Gordon seemed to have passed into the woods, for his horse's hoofs no longer rattled in the road, and Pinckney thought he heard the rustling of leaves and the breaking of sticks under his tread. Presently the tramp in the woods was parallel with his own horse's, as he thought, and in a few moments it seemed to die away ahead of him, as if he was surpassed in speed. Just after the noise ceased, he passed the very spot where he had been assaulted, and his horse—it was the one he rode at that time—without any resistance on the part of the rider, shied to the other side of the road. 'Twas lucky, perhaps, for Pinckney that it did so, for at the instant the sharp report of a pistol was heard in the bushes from which the animal shied, and a bullet cut the whisker that protruded from that rider's chin. His horse took fright and sprang uncontrollably on. If Pinckney had not been an admirable horseman, the suddenness of the start would have thrown him. He, however, kept his seat; but it was impossible for him at once to stop his horse, or even turn his head, which he attempted, without reflection, to do, that he might dash upon his waylayer, and shoot him down. The horse seemed determined that Pinckney should do no such thing, for he went nearly a mile before he would yield entirely to the control of the rein. Pinckney's suspicions naturally attached to Gordon, and he arrived at

Langdale's pretty well satisfied in his own mind that it was Gordon who had assaulted him before. The more he thought of the affair, the stronger were his convictions that his suspicions were just, and he determined to have Gordon arrested on his appearance in court the next morning, when he reflected it would be of no use, as he had no testimony against him.

When Pinckney entered Langdale's it was some time after dark. He found within Langdale seated by Miss Atherton, in what he thought a whispering conversation, while her uncle sat by a centre-table busy with the evening paper. There was a confusion, notwithstanding her great self-control, in Miss Atherton's manner towards him; but it was so slight that it escaped every eye but Pinckney, even the quick eye of Langdale. Pinckney would not have detected it had he known her so intimately. He was greeted cordially by Langdale, and presented to Mr Atherton, who was a handsome, worldly old bachelor.

"Fanny, dearest of all the dears! how is the fair Fanny, Pinckney?" asked Langdale, in his cheerfulness tone.

"Blooming and beautiful, I thank you, sir," replied Pinckney, "and full of sweet converse upon your gallantry. Oh! Miss Fitzhurst charged me," bowing to Miss Atherton and Langdale, "to make apologies for not calling on Miss Atherton the day she promised; her father's indisposition prevented her. When he has the gout badly he will have nobody by him but his daughter. She will seize the first opportunity of calling, Miss Atherton. Langdale, who so seldom speaks highly of aught of womankind, has awaked in her all her sex's curiosity, I might say envy, if Miss Fitzhurst were capable of the passion."

Miss Atherton bowed graciously, and Langdale said:

"You have done me but justice. Is the fair Fanny capable of the other paesq— jealousy? If she be, I'll warn her to keep a certain friend of mine in rosy bondage bound, at Holly. Not that Miss Fanny has not every attraction; but, where two magnets are of equal power, the one that you are nearest to is sure to attract you; and when it has attracted you," bowing to Miss Atherton, "of course you think its powers unparalleled."

"You flatter that certain friend of yours, Langdale, beyond all bounds, by even insinuating that Miss Fitzhurst can have any interest in him; and if he were in your situation, nearest to the one magnet, I have no doubt he would make your confession."

"Ha, ha! what a sad situation! speaking of magnets, what a sad situation he would be in, Miss Atherton, who should be placed exactly between two such magneta."

"He would be placed in the situation of Mahomet's coffin," said Miss Atherton.

"Yes, Miss Atherton," replied Pinckney, laughing, archly, "he would be suspended between heaven and hell."

"Your compliment is not equally attractive, Mr Pinckney," said Miss Atherton, loudly; "for it is evident that you would prefer one magnet, the upper one, though the laws of gravitation might in some cases aid the lower one."

"Doubtless all the earthly powers and passions would aid that one, but even in extremity, like a dying man, I should look up with hope."

Langdale looked quickly at the two, and fell into a musing attitude, while Miss Atherton said to her uncle:

"My dear uncle, not that I would drive you away from agreeable company, but you promised to call on Mr Paulton, did you not, this evening?"

"True," said Langdale, "and I promised to call with him. So, Mr Pinckney, I will make no apologies, as I leave you in a *teté-a-teté* with Miss Atherton."

Pinckney bowed; Mr Atherton made his apologies, and with Langdale departed.

When the door closed on Miss Atherton and Pinckney, there was the silence of more than a minute, which the lady broke, by saying:

"A fine night, Howard. Have you just arrived?"

"A few moments since, and on a special message. Pardon me one moment, Miss Atherton, and I will fulfil it." So saying, Pinckney left the room, and taking from the pocket of his overcoat, which hung in the hall, the miniature, letters, and rings, returned and resumed his seat.

"What does this mean, Howard?" asked Miss Atherton, turning slightly pale as she observed the packet.

"It means what it seems, Miss Atherton,—that I have brought you the memorials of the past. I have no longer any claims to them, and desire to restore them to their rightful owner. I should have done it before leaving Italy, but knew no one to whom I could intrust them; and it was also my desire, when I did so, that I should recover my own."

"You seem determined that I shall not misunderstand you, Mr Pinckney, and there is also great directness in doing such an errand one's self. Howard, Howard, Howard! but give them to me—no matter. Your's are now in one of my trunks, among some of my baggage which I have not had brought here. You shall have them at the earliest opportunity."

"If you please, Miss Atherton."

As she took the packet, she, with apparent carelessness, glanced over the contents, and observed :

"The locket is not here."

While Pinckney was explaining how he lost it, a servant entered, and said that there was a person in the hall who requested that he might speak with her.

"A person to speak with me! why don't you show him in, if he is a gentleman?"

"He is not a gentleman, ma'am."

"Ah! some verbal message from the hotel: tell him to come in. The hotel at which I stopped was a very fine one, Mr Pinckney."

As Pinckney assented, he threw his eye upon the messenger, who was just entering the room, and was surprised to see no other than the individual who, he supposed, had attempted to murder him—the witness against Bobby—Jack Gordon. He started with even more surprise than Pinckney, and looked as if he expected to be charged with something or other. Before Gordon spoke, Pinckney arose and said :

"I must bid you good night, Miss Atherton."

"Good night, Mr Pinckney; I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you often. Do bring Miss Fitzhurst to see me."

Pinckney bowed low and left the room, resumed his overcoat, and stepped forth into the street, wondering what Gordon could have to say to Miss Atherton. The night was not a very bright one, but the lamp at a corner, some twenty steps off, rendered objects quite distinct. As Pinckney advanced towards the lamp, a man met him, who seemed to have been stationary for a moment before, and asked politely if Pinckney would tell him who lived in that house, pointing to Langdale's.

"Mr Richard Langdale," replied Pinckney.

"Thank you, sir," rejoined the inquirer, loitering past.

Pinckney, after a moment's deliberation as to how he should spend the evening, determined to go to the theatre.

CHAPTER VIII.

An hour elapsed before Gordon left the residence of Langdale. When he found himself in the street, by the directed course he proceeded to that of Benbow, who dwelt at least a mile off, in an obscure part of the city. His quick eye detected a figure under the shade of the lamp as he passed, and in his auspicious mind the wonder instantly occurred what the designs of the person were. He hurried on, and began to fear that he was dogged; so, to avoid the consequences, he called a hack, and stepping in, ordered the hackman to drive to a certain square, which was some distance above Benbow's. There he alighted, and cautiously hastened to Benbow's; but fearing to give his accustomed signal at the front entrance, he looked round to see if he was observed, and then entered an alley beside the house, and then the yard, when, at the back door, he made three raps, gave a whistle, and, after some time, was admitted by his coadjutor.

"What brought you in at the back door?" said Benbow. "I always suspect something when you come in that way."

"Maybe I have suspicions of the other way. I called here to-night before, and you were not in."

"Come in now, then."

"No; it's no use. I'm in a hurry, and must be back to Springdale to-night. Benbow,

you must be out there early in the morning, before the court sits. I have fixed it so that you will get a summons by day. Let Lupton and me alone for that. He tells me that you will be a good witness to prove that this Bob, who is on his trial, is in the habit of passing counterfeit money."

"I washed my hands of that business, I told you!" exclaimed Benbow impatiently. "I attend to nothing but the regular business, and am getting afraid of that."

"In for a penny, in for a pound, Benbow, is as true as preaching. That infernal black rascal, old Fitzhurst's coachman, saw me slip the tin box between the logs. What a nigger says is no testimony, so they can't hurt me; but Lupton swears that my testimony must be bolstered up to convict him. The easiest and自然科学 thing in the world is to have you summoned; you committed him before for a like offence, and we want your testimony."

"But I say you can't have it."

"Can't have it? why, Benbow, you're cracked. Don't you see it's the very thing? If we can't send this lipping devil to the penitentiary, who'll suspect us? He can't 'peach against us; and as he has nobody to 'peach against, they'll put it down to his stubbornness."

"What do you want me to say?"

"Only that he was up before you for the same crime, and that he was let off on account of his youth. Don't you see it's the very thing?"

"Well, well; I've a misgiving in my mind that all this out of the course will lead to the worst kind of trouble."

"You're always creaking—there's a rapsat your dear---hast the signal, though."

"No, 'tin not," said Benbow, alarmed; "what shall I do?"

"Why, let 'em in."

"Come in, then, yourself."

"No, I must be off."

"Be off! I'm coming out to oblige you—you might as well oblige me."

"You're lilly-livered, Benbow—go it while you're young; however, I'll go in with you." And in they went together to the front room, where Benbow held his magisterial office, the door of which he opened, and admitted Ross, the celebrated rogue-taker.

"Ah," said Benbow, giving him a hearty shake of the hand, "come in."

The welcome personage was a tall, fine-looking fellow, fashionably dressed, but still with an air of vulgarity about him. He wore a large pair of whiskers in fine trim, and possessed a remarkably quick and merry eye. There was a careless off-handedness about him, which seemed to indicate that he took the world easy, and had little to do with its cares, crimes, or criminals. He was beyond the middle age, but he wore his years like an abbot, and appeared indifferent—very—to things about him. He unclasped his hand, and shook indexes frankly both with Benbow and Jack.

"Well, gentlemen," he exclaimed, "how does the world treat you?"

"Just so so," said Benbow; "money's scarce."

"Oh! that's always the complaint," said Ross; "my friend Gorden here, I warrant me, won't agree with you—now at least, just after the races, where I am told he has been sucking them in all round. I envy the life of a sportsman," continued he, throwing himself into a chair; "the world has no cares for them, and we constables nothing to do with them, except when they bungle in a professional way, and then they deserve punishment for bungling, if for nothing else."

"I agree with you there," replied Jack; "if I hadn't, I shouldn't have chosen the trade myself—but it has its perplexities."

"Yes," said Ross; "it requires a man to be everywhere at once sometimes. Now you, I suppose, who were this afternoon a witness at Springdale against that counterfeiter, had to be in town to-night to attend some meeting of your cronies, and pluck a pigeon."

"No; I was only a little tired of Springdale, and I thought I'd ride in to-night for company, and be out to-morrow time enough for court. Ross, tell me, is there no law for punishing a negro who interrupts a white man in open court while he is giving in his testimony?"

"None particularly; he may be punished for contempt of court, like any other disturber of the peace under the circumstances."

"Contempt of court! yes; and there was a contempt of Jack Gordon that I wouldn't take from a white man, let alone a negro. Ross, I wish you could manage so as to buy him for me."

"What per cent. will you give on the price?"

"Fifty down."

"Ah! whose negro is he?"

"Old Fitzhurst's."

"What do you consider him worth?"

"Worth! he is the old coachman—worth! nothing but to me, and I'll give a thousand dollars for him."

"And then get yourself hung for killing him. No, I'll have nothing to do with that business. Why, Benbow, where's your bottle? have you nothing to offer an old friend to drink? The weather has got comparatively mild again, but I'll stir these coals and take something, as I expect Jessop here soon on a business that will require the scent of a Videoc."

"Ah! what's in the wind?" asked Benbow, as he proceeded to place a decanter of brandy, with tumblers and water, on the table.

"Wait a while, all in good time; business is business, and pleasure is pleasure. Benbow, you're the very man whom I like to issue a warrant for me when I wish to catch a rogue; there's virtue in them; they always seem to lead me on the scent better than any other magistrate's warrants that I knew of. Here's my service to you, and may you never have as good a one issued against yourself."

"Against me!" said Benbow, replacing the decanter as he was in the act of putting it to the glass; "a joke, a joke, Ross."

"I know it is, and therefore am I joking. You look as if I was not, nevertheless; a secret conscience needs no accuser."

"That's true," replied Benbow, replenishing his glass; "and, upon the principle of another proverb, the virtue is not in my warrant, but in your skill."

"I'll lay you odds on that, and Gordon here shall be judge."

"Done," said Benbow; "a supper with liquor for the three of us, or as many more as you choose, should they happen to fall in."

"Agreed! and here's the proof. Last week, you remember, I arrested O'Reilly, the celebrated horse-thief. I met him about ten miles from here, and suddenly presenting old Smith's warrant at him, told him I arrested him. He looked at the warrant, and said, 'Ross, it's no go.'—'That's a fact,' said I, 'but there's virtue in this warrant,' and I showed him yours, when he surrendered forthwith."

"Likely enough I!" exclaimed Benbow; "but 'twas because Smith's term of office expired the day before you got his warrant, and so you got one from me, and presented the wrong one at first. He was always a blunderer."

"Well, then, there was the most virtue in yours. Don't you say so, Gordon?"

"It so strikes me," said Jack.

"Pooh! what does Gordon know about law I!" exclaimed Benbow. "His was no warrant at all, I tell you. There was no more virtue in it than if Gordon was to fill up a warrant, or you were to pass judgment on a man. A warrant, gentlemen, is not a warrant unless it issues from the proper person, from one, at the time of issuing it, in the full authority of the magistracy."

"Will you admit, then," said Ross, walking carelessly to the door, and opening it, as if he meant to look out for a moment, "will you admit—Halloo!—here's Jessop and Prettyman; come in" (they entered accordingly)—"will you admit that a warrant from Stansbury, who is in full authority of the magistracy, to arrest you for counterfeiting, and search your premises, is of any virtue?"

"Me!" exclaimed the terrified Benbow.

"I am sorry, Benbow," said Ross, in a serious tone, "but such are my instructions; you

can't but say that I have broken them, to you like a gentleman, and like a gentleman I will fulfil them: you know me, and I know you; so we'll leave Jessop and Gordon here till we return, and we'll commence up stairs first." So saying, Ross lit another candle which stood by, and asked Prettyman to accompany him. "You can stay, if you please, Benbow; only give me your keys, and it will prevent your trunks and doors from being broken open."

Benbow, paralysed with guilt, covered his face with his hands for a moment, and then, rising mechanically said, "Do what you please with me."

"Benbow, be a man!" said Gordon; "you don't fear, do you?"

"No, no; but I tell you, Gordon—yes, I'll go with you—no, I'll sit here with Gordon. here's my keys."

"You had better go with Ross!" exclaimed Gordon; "I must be off soon."

"Yes, yes; I'll go."

"Show the way, then," said Ross, lifting the candle. Benbow led the way up stairs, followed by Ross and Prettyman, and leaving Jessop and Gordon below.

"Jessop," said Gordon, who, by a strong effort, had compelled himself to keep his chair, "what does all this mean?"

"Mean! nothing, only that Benbow has some enemies who want to spit their spite upon him."

Meanwhile Ross and Prettyman made the strictest search up stairs, but without discovering anything whatever tending to criminate Benbow. They returned to his office, ransacked that, the cellar, and every other part of the house, with the same fruitless results. The while Benbow's confidence increased. At first he talked of his innocence; why should he be a counterfeiter? and then, as their probability of success waxed fainter, he began to speak of his magisterial character and the damages a court of justice would give him in its estimation. While he was thus expatiating they returned to his office, where Ross replaced the candle on the table, and helping himself to a glass of brandy and water, said:

"Benbow, you can't blame me—'tis all in the way of business; you're a gentleman, I'm a gentleman, and I've treated you accordingly. Take something yourself. The warrant was sworn out by the sheriff of the next county, who came here for the purpose. Jessop knows that."

"What! of Springdale county, where they are trying Bob Gammon?" asked Gordon, who several times during their absence had arisen to go, but who was detained by the careless manner of Jessop, who seemed indifferent to his going or staying. He was also painfully anxious to know the result, and after a moment's reflection it occurred to him, that Benbow's suspicious fears had always prevented him from keeping anything to criminate himself about his house.

"Yes, the same," replied Ross, carelessly; "but business is business, and now we are done with it. So, let's have glasses round; and, Benbow, this is another proof that there are no warrants like yours; so here's to the virtue of your warrants."

"Well!" exclaimed Benbow, much relieved as he quaffed a bumper, "I hope, Ross, I may never issue one against you. I must say you have acted like a gentleman. I'll be even with you some of these days."

"Don't mind that, my dear fellow!" exclaimed Ross; "you're out of custody; I'll take the responsibility of not taking you before Stansbury; just let the matter drop. Good night to you, my friends. I must now leave you. Sorry I am to leave such good company, but the best of friends must part. I always make it my business to be at the theatre every night before it closes, and it is now near ten o'clock."

Ross shook hands with all round, and proceeded to the theatre, whither we will follow him.

CHAPTER IX.

Pinckney, as he went to the theatre, was arrested by the glare of a fashionable jewellery-shop near by, and it occurred to him to step in and select a present for Fanny. The shopman busied himself to please his customer. Pinckney remarked that he wanted a locket, but that he did not like the fashion of those presented to him, when the shopman said—

“ I have one, sir, though not for sale, which I think is the handsomest thing of the kind I have ever seen. It was brought here by a person to have the hair taken out and altered; and I wonder at his taste in wishing any alterations—but we must please our customers.”

As he spoke, he opened a drawer, and, to Pinckney's surprise, produced the very locket, which had been taken from him with his watch and pocket-book on the night of the robbery.

“ Ah !” said Pinckney as he took it in his hand, “ may I ask where you got this ?”

“ It was brought to me, sir, some time since, by a jockey-like looking man, who gave directions to have it altered and other hair inserted, as I have told you. I have delayed altering it, I can scarcely tell why—but the man did not come for it when he said he would, and I have not touched it.”

“ Sir,” said Pinckney, “ look at it—can you discover any secret spring about it ?”

The jeweller took it, and after a close examination owned he could not.

“ There, sir,” said Pinckney, touching a spring, which flew open and disclosed a beautiful little miniature of a lady. “ This must convince you that I know something of the locket. Coming in from Mr Fitzhurst's—”

“ Mr Paul Fitzhurst's ?” asked the jeweller.

“ The same.”

“ He is one of my best customers.”

“ I was robbed of this among other articles. This article I did not mention in the advertisement. I lost a watch and pocket-book besides; be so kind as to describe, as nearly as you can, the individual who brought it to you.”

“ He certainly was not a gentleman,” replied the jeweller: “ he was good-looking, but, as I have said, jockey-like. I took him for a gambler.”

“ Would you know the man if you were to see him ?”

“ I think I should, sir.”

“ Do you think I could get a constable at this time of night ?” inquired Pinckney.

“ No doubt of it, sir; the theatre is within a few doors, you can get one there; and if you think you can trace the individual I will gladly go with you and identify him. I will go for one to the theatre.”—“ What time do you shut up ?”

“ Not until ten, or half-after, sir; above is my dwelling, sir: at any hour, though I should have retired, you can have me rapped up. I had a vague suspicion at the time the man came to have it altered that all was not right. I could not see what honest motive—it could not be a matter of taste, certainly— influenced him.”

Pinckney bade him good evening, and entered the theatre. Almost the first person he met was Colonel Bentley. Pinckney took him aside, and told him the circumstances.

“ Egad !” exclaimed the Colonel, “ Ross is here, and he will be the very man for you. I'll look for him.”

The colonel made inquiries about the theatre and in the saloon, and learned that Ross was always in by ten or after. Pinckney waited very impatiently until Ross came, when he was made acquainted with him, and gave him the details of the robbery, remarking that he suspected a certain person. “ But, sir,” he continued, “ I have heard of your acuteness; and, as I presume you know him, let's to the jeweller's, and see if you can guess from his description.”

As soon as Ross heard it, he asked—

“ Had he a quick step ?”

“ Think he had.”

“ Hat a little on one side ?”

"I don't know that—yes, yes : I think so."

"Did you observe that he showed where he has lost a tooth in the left jaw when he laughs?"

"I did not."

"Talks a good deal?"

"Yes."

"I know the man, sir," turning to Pinckney ; "his name is Gordon."

"The individual whom I suspect," replied Pinckney. "I wish you could find him."

"I can, sir ; and this very night. Mr Whitman (to the jeweller), will you go with us?"

"Certainly, sir," replied Whitman, putting the locket in his pocket, and telling his assistant to shut up.

"He's carousing now at Benbow's, the magistrate, with Benbow and Jessop the constable," said Ross.

The three entered a hasty at the theatre door, and in ten minutes were let out at Benbow's. They could hear a merry conversation within, and Ross sans ceremonie opened the door, and bade them enter. Sitting cosily around the table enjoying their cigars, and with the brandy bottle nearly empty, they found the worthies. Gordon pushed his chair involuntarily back, as if he meant to rise when he saw Pinckney, but kept his seat.

"Don't be disturbed, gentlemen, don't be disturbed," said Ross, politely ; "pleasure is pleasure, but business is business. Squire, I am about to try the virtue of one of your warrants again. Mr Gordon, I am sorry to disturb the festivities of this convivial occasion among friends where I was myself lately a joyous partaker ; but, sir, I arrest you for the robbery of Mr Pinckney, the gentleman before you."

"Me!" said Gordon, jumping fiercely up.

"Mr Gordon, allow me to remark, sir, like one gentleman to another, that this is in bad taste—always take things coolly, sir—'tis what your lawyer would advise you to do if he were sitting beside you."

"Let him prove it," said Gordon, taking his seat and the hint together, and looking at Pinckney with malignant defiance.

Benbow, much against his inclination, resumed the magisterial chair, and swore Pinckney and the jeweller. The former gave a detailed account of the robbery, and swore positively that the locket was his, and that he was then robbed of it, but could not identify the robber. He was followed by the jeweller, who gave the account of Gordon's bringing it to him to be altered : he swore further positively to his identity. Gordon drew his watch from his pocket as the examination proceeded, and his countenance was relieved apparently of all care.

"There, sir," said he to Pinckney scornfully, as he took from the inner seal of his watch-chain a locket which could not be distinguished from the one Pinckney claimed. "I suppose your oath is broad enough to let you swear to that to?"

"Let me look at it," said Pinckney.

"No, not out of my hands," cried Gordon.

"The reason, sir," said Pinckney, "why I know this locket, as he touched the spring and disclosed the likeness of Miss Atherton, is because it has the likeness of a lady concealed in it whom I well know."

"Ha ! is that it?" said Gordon ; "then examine that, and tell me if it ain't the likeness of a gentleman that you know better still."

Pinckney received the locket as Gordon offered it, found it in every respect like his own, and, touching a spring, disclosed his own likeness. It was one which, in fact, he had given, in Italy to Miss Atherton when he had received hers.

"Where did you get this?" exclaimed Pinckney, in amazement.

"Maybe from the lady who gave you that, ha ! ha ! ha !—what do you think of that, my buster—won't you swear to it?"

"I would swear to it, undoubtedly," said Pinckney, showing it to the magistrate ; "it is my own likeness, and a good one—I had it painted myself by a celebrated Florentine artist when abroad, who took this of a lady that I knew then, and now, at the same time. What were you doing at that lady's to-night?" he asked of Gordon.

"What were you doing there, and be hanged to you?" replied Gordon. "You're much

of a gentleman, ain't you, to be dragging a lady's name up here. The tailoring about you is all of the gentleman that belongs to you."

"Sir," said Pinckney to Benbow, "this individual must have stolen this from Miss Atherton to-night when I saw him there. I hope that you will place him in the safest custody to-night. Miss Atherton lives at Mr Langdale's, and, disagreeable as it must be to a lady to appear against any one, early to-morrow, as early as you say, I will conduct her thither."

"It won't do, my lark," said Gordon. "I know more about you than you think I do; I've had my eye on you in other countries. Has that lady been here a month?"

Pinckney at first disdained to reply, but in a minute he reflected how foolish it would be, and answered, "No! she has not."

"Has she been here three weeks?" interrogated Gordon.

"No!"

"You'll die a dog's death yet, my gentleman; yes, a hanged dog's death. Here's the squire and Jessop saw me have that locket six months ago—I'll have you in gaol, my visitor to the 'big house,' before we have parted; you're friendly to Peg Gammon too, ain't ye?"

"Jessop," said Ross, "did you see that in Gordon's possession six months ago?"

"Let me look at it," said Jessop, and he took it in his hand, and, after examining it, said. "Yes, this certainly is in the locket—he did not disclose the miniature then, but now, when I close it and examine it, I don't think I can possibly be mistaken."

"Let me look at it," said Benbow, and after examining it also, he remarked, "I never knew it held a likeness, but I've seen this in Jack's—in Gordon's—possession six months ago, I'm certain."

Pinckney concluded that the three companions were all rogues together, and whispered so to the jeweller, who replied, that he knew nothing of Gordon or Beabow, but that Jessop bore the highest character as an honest officer, for he had spent a summer in Springdale, and there learned it.

Pinckney took Ross to the far end of the room, and asked him what he thought of it.

"I don't know what to think of it," replied Ross; "and when I don't know what to think, I don't say much. That Jessop brought me a letter to-night, from which I understand he is trustworthy and honest. I have been at fault to-night most damnable—it is perfect hocus-pocus. I wish I was Vidocq—the greatest man that ever lived, sir—O! that we had him here."

"Well, gentlemen!" exclaimed Gordon, triumphantly, "there's one thing certain, that though you may set a rogue to catch a rogue, there's none of you can catch an honest man. I want this Mr Pinckney held to bail to answer for false imprisoning me. Here, fork over those lockets—I believe I'll take the two of them; you needn't (to the jeweller) make them alterations I ordered."

"I hope, sir," said Pinckney to Benbow, "that you will retain the lady's locket—the one which bears my likeness, until she shall be seen upon the subject."

"It's no go," said Gordon, filling himself a glass of liquor. "It's no go, my ruffle-shirted cock; I've been in the law before. The lockets are mine, and Benbow, who knows the law, knows it."

"You'll certainly keep them," said Ross to the squire.

"Ahem!" said Benbow, rustling in his chair. "I incline to think not. About this gentleman," looking at Mr Pinckney, "I know nothing—he may be, and he may not be anything—what do you know of him?"

"Nothing," replied Ross, "but that Colonel Bentley introduced him to me as a gentleman who had been robbed—and I see that he is a gentleman."

"Very—very sorry, indeed," said Benbow, stammering, "that I can't see as you do—no harm meant, Mr Pinckney—but with my own eyes I saw Gordon have that locket six months ago, so did Jessop; one he had then, even before this alleged robbery; the other, the match to it, because he happened to have after the robbery, and take to a jeweller to have altered, that's no reason that he robbed Mr Pinckney, no more reason than that he robbed the lady, and Mr Pinckney is willing to swear that this is the lady's. No! there may be more painters' an' one, and lockets may look as like as two peas. This is a case in which I would not

advise; but Mr Gordon can do as he pleases. I decide, however, that he has the right to both the lockets, and decree possession accordingly."

"Not only possession!" exclaimed Gordon, "but I want this individual," pointing to Pinckney, "held to bail in the sum of ten thousand dollars for malicious prosecution—I'll show him what the law is."

"Ahem! well," said Benbow—

"Benbow," exclaimed Ross angrily, interrupting him,—"let me see those lockets a moment, Gordon," he said, curbing himself, and turning pleasantly to Gordon, who handed them to him. "Benbow, this gentleman goes as he went; there shall be no virtue in any process of yours in relation to him to-night. Jack (to Gordon), you'll have to bring your action of replevin or trover against me for this jewel, for you shall not have it until you do."

Gordon gazed on the resolute countenance of Ross, and, changing his tone, burst into a laugh, saying, "Ross, you're a case. We're friends, and friends can take liberties; besides, you're an honest man, and I am not afraid to trust you with them; as to the matter of that, take them—I make you a present of 'em both. Now, don't say I never gave you anything."

"No, I won't," replied Ross; "and in requital of your gift, as one good turn deserves another, I will, some of these days, present you with some jewelry myself; for instance, a pair of bracelets. Good night to you."

As Ross spoke, he opened the door, through which Pinckney and the jeweller passed, followed by the baffled thief-catcher. They walked together some steps in silence, which Ross broke by saying, in evident chagrin,—

"And I'll keep my word. I never was so at fault in my life. Accidents will happen: Napoleon was not always successful, and even Vidocq has been as foully foiled as this. Lord! how fate is bearing and forbearing with that scoundrel. Some of these days I'll astonish him even more than he has astonished me. He's a good deal in liquor."

"Who is this Gordon?" asked Pinckney.

"A sportsman, sir, as the phrase goes. Mr Pinckney, here are the lockets, sir," said Ross, as they got opposite to the door of a restaurateur, where the light shone forth; "they belong to you, sir, and they are better in your custody than mine."

As Pinckney took the lockets, he slipped a bank bill in Ross's hand, in requital for his trouble, and bade him and the jeweller good night. He proceeded to Langdale's, where he lodged when in town, and found that gentleman, with his guests and Mr Bradley, late as the hour was, at a game of whist.

"Ah! Pinckney, welcome!" exclaimed Langdale, as they all arose from the card-table; "I had a present of delightful game made me to-day, and I have ordered the cook to wait until you came."

"I am sorry that you did so," replied Pinckney, "for though I cannot resist the temptation of these night suppers, I am persuaded they are prejudicial to one's health."

As they proceeded to the supper room, Pinckney whispered, unobserved, to Miss Atherton:—"Oblige me by making an opportunity for me to say one word to you before you retire—I must leave in the morning early."

The lady threw a bright glance on him, and said, in a tone of tenderness—"I will, Howard."

"Fair coz," said Langdale to Miss Atherton, bowing across the table to her, as he took with her a glass of wine, "you make me proud of my dwelling. How true that scrap of verse is:—

'Had you ever a cousin, Tom?
Did your cousin happen to sing?
We have sisters all by the dozen, Tom,
But a cousin's a different thing!'"

"Coz," replied Miss Atherton, "for I will call you coz too, after that, do you know that I think you were meant for a knight of other days, instead of a merchant? I quere whether you are as agreeable in your counting-room as you are here."

"O! sink the shop. No, indeed, I am not: I have not at least the attractions there to tempt the effort. But I would not change my vocation for either of the professions; all the variation I ask is a little of political bustle now and then. As for medicine, I don't see how any man of the least sensibility could practise it; and as for the law, the counsel is so often

the criminal, that there is as little difference between being at the bar and in the bar in phraseology as in fact. The merchant is the great controller of commerce, and the world is indebted more to it for civilization than to aught else. It was the commercial spirit which reclaimed this continent from the savages. Somebody called England a nation of shopkeepers; they should rather have said a nation of merchants. No; as far as my vocation goes, I am not only content, but proud."

"The law," remarked Bradley, "is the great profession of this country."

"That and counterfeiting," rejoined Langdale.

"We are, most of us, counterfeiters, one way or the other," said Miss Atherton, smiling.

"And few of us detectors," retorted Pinckney.

"Upon my word," said Langdale, looking at Pinckney and Miss Atherton, "I should like to know what were the continental relations between you two abroad."

"Like that of the mother country and her colonies," said Pinckney.

"Ah!" rejoined Langdale; "and which of you threw off the yoke?—such rosy bondage would endure with me for ever."

"Yet," said Miss Atherton, in a tone of badinage, "Mr Pinckney is a rebel."

"Ha!" said Langdale; "tell me, Mr Atherton, what were the intimacies between this gentleman and lady abroad?"

"That's more than I can tell," replied Mr Atherton; "I see they are old acquaintances; but Clara's tongue must have been pledged to silence, for I never heard her speak of Mr Pinckney, that I remember."

"Oh! uncle, how can you say so?" exclaimed Miss Atherton. "Don't you remember how I used to talk of the gallant young Southerner, who resisted all my powers?"

"Now, I remember me," replied Mr Atherton, "I do; but, Clara, you had so many strings to your bow, that I hardly think you can recount them yourself."

"Come, uncle, that is unjust; you know it; I do wish, nevertheless, I had the power of coquetry—it must be delightful to use that only weapon a woman has. But you gentlemen wish to smoke, I know, and I have received a letter from a friend to-day who makes inquiries about Mr Pinckney. If he has any curiosity he may see it, and I'll send him back to you in a minute."

So speaking, Miss Atherton rose, when Pinckney offered her his arm, and they passed alone into the withdrawing room.

"Miss Atherton," said Pinckney, "may I ask who that man, Gordon, is?"

"Gordon! what Gordon?"

"The person I saw here this evening."

"Really you have a deal of curiosity—I am an equestrian, as you know, and that person having heard that I had the desire to exhibit my skill in that way to the citizens here, came to boast of the qualities of an animal he has, by way of effecting a sale—"

"Where is the locket, if I may ask, which I gave you in Florence?"

"Where is the one I gave you?"

"I am not asking, Miss Atherton, an idle question."

"Howard, you may take me through the whole catechism—I have it in my trunk."

"Are you certain of that fact?"

"Now I remember—maybe I have lost it—I know I lost something which you gave me."

"Pinckney smiled.

"Two things, then, which you gave me, Howard, and the locket is one of them—"

At this moment the gentlemen entered the room, and a few minutes afterwards Miss Atherton departed.

In the morning, with the dawn, Pinckney was on horseback. He reached Holly to breakfast. In a *tête-à-tête* with Fanny he forgot Bobby's case, until Pompey, who had been Edgetting in and out of the room, reminded him of it. He instantly repaired to the court, and heard the crier at the door calling the name of John Gordon; but no John Gordon answered. He entered the court, and found the judge on the bench, and the jury in the box, waiting the coming of the witness. Bobby was seated near his lawyer, with Peggy beside him. At this moment Jessop, who had just arrived from the city, entered the bar, and held a hurried conversation with Mr Mason, who arose, and addressing the court, said—

" May it please your honours, I apprehend Gordon will not be here. In consequence of the information which I received from the black man whom I examined, after the court adjourned yesterday, I dispatched Mr Jessop to the city last evening: what he learned or discovered it is not for the purposes of justice proper to be narrated publicly. Suffice it to say, that I understood from him that he met Gordon, the prosecuting witness, in town last night, and left him at an eating-house at two o'clock this morning, when Gordon told him that he should not be here to-day: perhaps your honours had better have Jessop sworn as to that fact."

Jessop was accordingly sworn. He stated that he met Gordon at Benbow's, whither he himself was dispatched on business, and that he afterwards fell in with him at an eating-house, and that, as he was leaving it, Gordon called him back, and told him to present his compliments to their honours, and say that if he should not be here in time to-day they need not wait for him, as he had business of his own which was of more consequence to him than the State's.

Here the prosecuting attorney arose, much against the wish of Mr Lupton, and stated that he did not think it was proper for him to press the case any further, as from circumstances which had within a few minutes come to his knowledge, and which he meant to place before the grand jury at their next sitting, he was satisfied that the prisoner was entirely guiltless, and a much injured person.

" I knew it! " shouted old Pompey, who had followed Pinckney into court, and who could not contain himself; " I knew it, and now everybody knows it."

" Silence," exclaimed the judge. " Sheriff, take that man into custody, and put him in gaol—"

Here Mr Mason rose and said:

" It is so seldom, may it please your honours, that any debt is paid here, saving that which is set down ' in the bond,' that when the spontaneous one of gratitude breaks forth from an honest heart, and from one of a race, too, on whom ours does not often impose such claims, that I hope the acknowledgment of it will not be demanded, and will be forgiven, though it is not filed according to law. This boy once saved his humble friend from unmerited punishment, and it was the noble impulse of gratitude in the bosom of the African which led us yesterday to the inquiry which established the innocence of the youth. I therefore move your honour that the African be forgiven his unintentional breach of decorum."

The court countermanded their order to the sheriff, and the jury, after a short address from the judge, instantly pronounced the prisoner Not Guilty!

Poor Peggy threw her arms round Bobby, and burst into an ecstasy of tears; her sobs of joy were heard throughout the court-house above the tumult of approbation which his acquittal occasioned. It is a curious fact in human nature to know, that the sternest censurers of Bobby, as he was conducted from the gaol the day before, were now the loudest in their approbation of the verdict.

When Bobby, attended by Peggy and Pompey, passed from the crowd, the old coachman observed:

" Mister Robby, the proceedings o' this day has give me Pompey, as old master would say, satisfaction beyond measure; but there's one thing I didn't like ne how; that great lawyer from town, who pleaded to keep me out of gaol—can't he plead, though—called me an African; now I is not an African—I is an American born and bred, and old master can prove it—he must ha' been thinking o' Nat Ramsey."

Mr Mason dined at Holly that day, and was eloquent in his account of the trial, dwelling with deserved praise on the conduct of Pompey. When the company had retired from the table Mr Fitzhurst remained behind in his gouty chair, and ordered old Pompey and all the servants to be called. When they entered, Mr Fitzhurst said to Pompey—" Pompey, I have been listening to Mr Mason's and Mr Pinckney's account of Robert's trial to-day. I rejoice to know that the lad is innocent, and I am highly gratified with the feelings which you exhibited. It was certainly wrong in you to interrupt the court, but the impulse under which you did it was the very noblest of our nature. I respect and honour you. You have always been a faithful servant, and I now find you a noble-minded man, and I have sent for you before my household to say, that I have got Mr Mason to make out your manumission papers; here they are. I have settled on you what will make you comfortable for life; besides which, I have

given you a spot of ground, and will build you a house on it. Henceforth and hereafter you are a free man. Give me your hand."

"Master!" exclaimed Pompey, "I takes your hand too proud, but I won't take your free papers... I objects to it. Who'll tend the coach horses when I'm tending that ground? who'll care for me? who'll take care of the coach? It would break my heart to see another coloured person in Pompey's livery on the coach-box when I ought to be there myself; for I'll like to know, master, now, who but old Pompey can drive you over the ruts when you've got the gout, and not hurt you? You've said that yourself before to-day when old mistress talked about another coachman. You see at once, master, it won't do at all."

"Well, well, Pompey," said Mr. Fitzburst, pretending to feel a severe twinge of the gout to hide his emotions; "just as you choose, just as you choose. But I say this to you, that I want you to understand that henceforth you're your own master."

"But, master, I wants you to understand that you're my master too. We played together when we were boys; I waited on you when you grew up, I've waited on you ever since, and I'll wait on you till I die."

CHAPTER X.

Ross felt anything but gratified at his unsuccessful effort to affix the guilt of robbery on Gordon. If there is one passion predominant in the heart of a constable over another, 'tis the desire to be successful in such operations. And it is very natural—such success is the means whereby they live—or rather, it is the source of their most profitable emolument. Besides the general *esprit de cœur* common to his class, Ross, from his great reputation for success in such matters, felt peculiarly the dishonour of a failure. It was touching him in his tenderest point. It was like doubting the valour of a soldier, the eloquence of an orator, the skill of a statesman, or the imagination of a poet. He determined, come what might, without fee or reward, for the sake of his own honour and reputation, to follow him up, and fix the guilt upon him, for guilty he felt satisfied he was.

Ross, besides his constabulary dignity, was the keeper of a livery stable, and in that way, as Gordon was fond of swapping and trading in horses, he became acquainted somewhat with his character.

About eleven o' clock on the night after the adventure at Benbow's, Ross hurried from the theatre to his domicil, and entirely changed his clothes, selecting, from a number of suits, one which seemed made for a country waggoner, in which, with great attention to the character in which he was to appear, he arrayed himself. From a number of wigs in a drawer he selected a caroty, uncombed one, which he adjusted so as entirely to hide his own hair. He then combed back his whiskers, and selecting a false pair of the same colour with his wig, he fixed them carefully to his face, having before his glass four candles lit, that he might make no mistake. This accomplished, he opened a box of paints, and with the skill of an artist adapted his eyebrows to his wig and whiskers. He then gave his cheeks a saffron hue, tied a coarse striped neckcloth carelessly round his neck, and drew on a foxy pair of thick-soled country boots. Having done these things to his satisfaction, he took a waggon whip from the corner of the room, and placing the glass so that he could see his whole form reflected, he scanned himself closely and complacently.

"I have learned a great deal from Videocq," said he to himself; "but now, were he in my place, he would not hesitate to shave off his whiskers and do the thing completely; but I think I'll do pretty well without. To take off my whiskers would be paying rather too dear for the whistle. I'll step into the Eagle as I go along, and see if any of the fellows recognise me."

Thus soliloquising, he left his house by the backway, without suffering even any of his family to see him. He walked in the gangling gate of a waggoner, to whose tread the hard basement is disagreeable, though it was night, and he could not be observed. He seemed, when he assumed a character, to possess it completely. In ten minutes he entered the Eagle, which was an eating and drinking house, where many of his acquaintance resorted. There were some dozen persons within, eating, drinking, and smoking. Gaping around as though the establishment was new to him, he asked:

"I say, strangers, does any one of you know a constable named Ross?"

"Yes," replied several persons.

"What manner of a man may he be?"

"A tall, good-looking man, with big whiskers and a red cheek, and he dresses very neatly. Why?" replied one of the party, who was himself a constable and a friend of Ross.

"Because I wants him on particular business."

"Ah! what's turned up——"

"That's the pint I want to see Ross upon."

"Well, I'm a constable—tell me."

"Yes, but you ain't Ross, though, stranger; I reckon every lawyer what pleads ain't a Squire Mason."

"I don't see how in the devil," said the constable, "Ross has got such a name. I'm told he went to arrest a man for robbery last night; actually found him in Benbow's, a magistrate, and couldn't come it."

"They say," said the assumed waggoner, "that he can scent out a rogue as a dog would a rabbit."

"That may be," replied the constable, "but from what I heard of the business last night, he can't catch him even when he has earthed him."

"Can't! maybe he didn't want to catch him."

"Then he ought to be earthed himself," retorted the constable. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

"You're right, stranger; but if Ross can't do my business, who in the devil can?"

"Speak out; what's the matter?"

"Speak out then, stranger; there would be no use in either the hand bird or the bush birds—they'd be a good ways beyond the reach of the school-boy's staff upon their tails."

"Business is business," retorted the constable, "as Ross says; and if you can't say what your business is, you can't have it done."

"That's a fact," replied the waggoner; "is Ross as high a man as I am?"

"Taller, but not so thick; black hair and whiskers, with a touch of high living in his face: lately, since he's got a name—got his name up—he's given too much to high living and dandism, and that accounts for the reason why he is not so successful as formerly—but, as I say, he's got his name up, and now he can lie abed."

"Why don't you get your name up, then, and lie abed too? it's bed-time."

"Look here, my country friend—if you're for any high lark, just say so, and I'll give you a bed in the watch-house in no time."

"Thank ye, stranger; I sleep in my waggon; but I wants to find Ross."

"Go down to Rose Alley, then, and rap him up; he lives next door to his livery stable."

"I'm obliged to you, stranger; I knows the place—in Rose Alley, hey? I'll find him." So speaking, our waggoner left the Eagle, followed by the constable.

"Look here, stranger," said that worthy, resting himself carelessly against the lamp-post in front of the door; "tell us what's the matter?"

"I'd like to, for I think high of you. I told you—but there's a friend of mine concerned, and he charged me by all means to tell it to nobody but Ross."

"How do you know that I'm not Ross?"

"By the best of tokens; you're neither tall nor good-looking, nor you ain't no whiskers."

At this the constable turned on his heels and entered the Eagle again, and our waggoner walked off.

"I've learnt a good lesson from Bartlett," said Ross to himself as he walked away; "that puts me in mind—hang it—here I've forgot my pistols; I must back and get 'em."

Quickly Ross hastened to secure the weapons. The light suspended from the middle of his stable was yet burning, and, gliding in the backway, he pocketed his "barkers," and departed. Satisfied with the trial of his disguise at the Eagle, he proceeded to fulfil his errand. He avoided the street in which the Eagle was situated, and, taking a direct route, bent his steps to a less respectable portion of the city. When he nearly reached the outskirts, he stopped for a moment and eyed his locality. A broad street, which soon broke into the open road which led to Springdale, lay before him, while on his right was an obscure alley,

illuminated by the light of a single lamp. At its mouth he stopped, and gazed steadily down the avenue. No voice was heard—no light was seen. “I have oversaid my hour,” said Ross to himself; “I see no light from the window. I’ll step down the alley at any rate; maybe it is not to be seen from here.”

Accordingly he walked down the alley, which was without a side pavement, and when he had got about midway, he looked up at a house which was better than its neighbours, but in which the inhabitants seemed to have retired, as there was no light to be seen about it. Loitering with a slackened step as he drew near, Ross observed it with much care, and passed on to the other end of the alley. Here he paused awhile irresolute, and returned again. Still there was no light. He reached the mouth of the alley, determined to return home, when, in turning round, he observed a light streaming from the window of the house we have designated. Instantly he advanced towards it, and, after observing the situation of the candle, which could be seen from the window, he passed up an alley which divided the houses from the one next to it, and, opening the back door without rapping, trod, with a loud, creaking step, up stairs. His foot had scarcely touched the first step of the stairway, when a door was opened at his head above, and a female voice said :

“Is that you, Jemmy?”

“Indeed it is; and I am glad to see you,” replied Ross. “This is market night at the fish-market, and I’ve been kept away, Debby.”

“Better late than never,” said Debby, holding the light to show our worthy the way.

“Pretty big market to-night,” said he, quickening his pace; “trunk will be dug-champ to-morrow.”

“I suspected as much,” said the woman, as she re-entered the room, into which Ross followed, closing the door after him.

The apartment in which Ross entered was scrupulously clean, but there was nothing in it but what the necessaries of life required. A bed, a few chairs, a trunk, with two or three cooking utensils, and an unpainted pine cupboard, were all the furniture it contained. The woman was about the middle age, decent in her attire and demeanour, and evidently one who had seen better days. She was the widow of a former partner of Ross’s who had been killed by a kick from a horse, and who had left her penniless. Ross, whose heart was not an unkind one, was in the habit of assisting her when she could not get work sufficient for her maintenance. She was one of that meritorious class of females in whose behalf the late venerable and philanthropic Matthew Carey, just before he died, so successfully exerted himself. She supported herself by taking in sewing.

“I thought,” said Ross in a whisper, “when I missed the light, that I was too late.”

“No,” said she; “he came in but a minute ago, while you, I expect, for I think I heard you go by (Ross nodded assent), were at the other end of the alley. He is very uncertain; and I began to think he would not be here to-night at all. He treats the poor thing shockingly; and if you could fix anything on him that would send him to the penitentiary, you’d serve him right. I know nothing about him, except that I know him from having seen him one day at your stable. He don’t know me at all; for I was in the room with you where you keep your accounts, and I saw him by looking through the window that looks from it into the stable. I’m glad I happened to hear you mention his name when I was down there this morning—they’ll take you for my country-cousin that I told her off. He has inquired before this who you are. I never should have known you.”

“How shall I continue to see and overhear him?” asked Ross.

“In the closet under the stairs I keep my wood,” replied the widow; “and there is only a board partition between that and their room, in which there are large cracks. I removed the wood away from the largest, and you can see and overhear distinctly; the door is unlocked, and I have left it ajar; so you can easily slip down into the closet.”

“Good!” replied Ross, laying his whip upon the bed, and disengaging himself of his boots. He then told the woman to move a chair, so as to hide the noise of turning the bolt. When he had turned it, instead of opening the door slowly, which would in all probability have made it creak, he drew it back quickly, and prevented that effect. With a step accustomed to such purposes, he stole down stairs, and entered the closet without making the least noise. Through a broad crack he had nearly a full view of the adjoining chamber, which bespoke more

poverty than the one above it, without any of its tidiness. A rag of carpet covered a few feet of the floor near the hearth, in which there were a few coals; a bedstead with one leg broken, the place of which was supplied by a bit of rough board nailed clumsily on, stood in the corner, with a bed on it, scantly covered, which, with three chairs, a rough table, and an old trunk under the bed, composed the furniture. A kettle and a broken skillet stood in the chimney corner. Gordon sat before the hearth, with his left arm leaning on the table, on which was a black bottle of brandy and a tumbler. He looked out of sorts, and dispirited. A woman, careless in her attire, but whose countenance and form exhibited the faded remains of what once had been great beauty, busied herself about the apartment, seemingly with no other purpose than to notice, unobserved, her companion, for she drew out the trunk, and replaced it without taking any article from it—the while throwing hurried and anxious glances on him.

"Damn it! I have done fussing so," said Gordon, pitiably.

"Oh, John!" exclaimed the woman, in accents of the deepest tenderness. "I havn't seen you much lately, and I am so sorry to see you troubled;" and, as she spoke, she went up to him and wept upon his shoulder, but he rudely pushed her aside, remarking:

"Damn it! why do you come with your tears to me? Be contented now; that hussey that I wanted you to fix up here for is not coming; I don't know that I am ever coming again; so content yourself. Where's the money I gave you to fit up here?"

"I have it, John—I have it."

"I don't see that you have spent any of it," angrily retorted Gordon, looking round.

"No, no! none of it; here it is," said she, rising from a little stool on which she had thrown herself, and stepping to her trunk.

"Why did you not get it changed, as I asked you? I'll whale you to death some of these days—you know me."

"John, I would do anything for you—but not that—not that; let me be honest, in God's name. Terribly have I suffered for one violation of the law to please you; and John, passing this money, and being convicted of it, would not punish me so much in the disgrace as in being separated from you. That's my fear. No! let me live here, and drudge daily at the wash-tub or the ironing-table, and hire out when I can—in that way I can support myself; only come and see me, John, and let me see you often;—yes, and I will change the money for you, if it must be so; but do not ask me to change it to bring another woman here. John, if you knew my heart, and how devotedly I love you, you would not so break it."

"According to your account of what it stands, I hardly think there can be any such thing as breaking it; but that jig's up about that hussey in the country. I'm a gone man; and if she don't look out, she'll be a gone woman. Will you change the money?"

"Yes; but not for her."

Gordon raised his fist in the act of striking her, when she said—

"John, don't strike me; the woman up stairs will hear you, and she's decent and orderly, and has promised to get me something to do."

"She has—has she? Well, what money have you got? I don't mean what I gave you;—what change—what good money?"

"Don't speak loud, John; she might overhear you. I have a half of a dollar, which I got yesterday for washing; will you have it?"

"Yes; I shall want it to-night. I'm going out to the tavern at the forks of the road not far short of Springdale, and the pester in these times is the best thing there. The woman up stairs promised to get work for you?"

"Yes; and she is quite a decent kind of a body. She's a widow, and that man we heard go up stairs is a country friend of hers. I don't know what her husband was—"

"A country cousin, hey? I expect he's pretty much of a greenhorn. He treads like a fellow who cares not who knows his comings and goings; I can't tread myself that way of late; I've had dark misgivings. I believe that the liquor I've taken lately has unsevered me—blast it! love your swain! I'll take another glass,"—and he proceeded to fill his cup accordingly.

"John, don't drink any more; you always seem to fear most when you have drank the most—".

"Woman, afterwards—afterwards, but at the time not; the boldest things I've done was then. Want some?"

"No, John."

"Who do you think I saw last night? If it wasn't that I have so many fears upon other matters, I'd make a speculation. Your old mistress."

"Who? not Miss Clara?"

"Yes; she's Miss or Mrs somebody; and if it wasn't for Tom Fenton, who I expect has peached, I could frighten hush money out of a certain quarter. She'd give something for me to keep dark, I reckon."

"John, what motive have you to injure her? I am sure she was a friend of yours in great need, and she has always been a great friend of mine."

"Yes, I understand; very well—we'll see; but, by Jove, I know that which will cost her dear. I suppose you call her a friend of mine in making me marry you."

"Well, John, a friend of mine, then. What harm can you do her, John?"

"That's my business."

"Did she ask for me, John?"

"Yes. I told her you were dead."

"Where does she live, John?"

"What! you want to go and see her, do you? make a call, and prove me a liar?"

"John, why should you object to my seeing her?"

"If for no other reason, because I told her you were dead."

"John, do let me go and see her."

Not another word, if you don't want to be knocked down." Saying which, Gordon filled himself another glass of brandy, and turned away from the woman, who musingly, and with a sorrowful countenance, gazed into the fire.

CHAPTER XL

The silence of Gordon and his wife, for she was no other, was interrupted by a gentle tap of the window from above stairs at their door.

"Who is that?" exclaimed Gordon, putting his hands on his breast.

"Nobody, John, but Mrs Baxter from up stairs—shall I let her in? let me put away the bottle first."

"Well, you never told her you were my wife, did you?"

"Never!"

"Well, let her in then. I should like to form my own opinion of her."

Obedient to the order, Mrs Gordon opened the door and welcomed in Mrs Baxter.

"It is very late," said the widow, bustling to a chair which Mrs Gordon handed her; "but this is market night at the fish-market, and a country friend of mine wants to make change for a ten dollar bill; have you got two fives, sir?" to Gordon.

"The very thing," said Gordon; "you're in luck; ask your friend to walk down and take a friendly glass with me. Catherine, that change I gave you the other day." Catherine looked imploringly at Gordon, who took no notice of her, while the widow remarked, rising: "Well, you're very kind—I'll call him;" and she proceeded up stairs.

"For God's sake, John," said his wife to him when they were left alone, "don't pass that money on him."

"For the devil's sake, and that's your own, keep your tongue, or I'll knock you down. No, then," he said, as the sudden thought struck him; "I won't pass it on him, you shall do it yourself."

The steps of Ross and Mrs Baxter were now heard descending the stairs, and as they entered the room the widow observed that that, pointing to the disguised constable, was her friend.

"Aha! glad to see you," said Gordon; "now is the time for the country folks to make money. Let's have a glass to our better acquaintance."

"Agreed," said the waggoner. "I objects to liquor much while I'm working, but it comes very natural to me when I'm from home."

"It's good if kept in subjection," said Gordon, handing him the tumbler, and apologising for having but the one; "like fire, it's a good servant, but bad master. Have we met before? there's something in your voice that strikes me, but I certainly can't say that I remember you."

"Maylike we have met—I am not certain—I think I did see you in market one morning. Do you live in these parts? My service to you, stranger," and he swallowed his liquor.

"No, no; not exactly. In a big city like this, men, though, might live for ever and never knew each other. How much money do you want changed?"

"Only a ten dollar bill. I've got word that a friend of mine living up by Springdale wants to barter with me for a farm, and I think I'll go there to-morrow and see if we can't drive a bargain."

"Aha! Springdale! are you much acquainted in that neighbourhood?"

"No, not the least. I live in the other direction. I sent out to him yesterday some money that I owed him, and he sent word that to-morrow he would be at Springdale. I mistrust him a little."

"What's his name?" asked Gordon.

"Battleborough—old Job Battleborough. Do you know him?"

"No, I don't; I heard of such a man, though. Catharine, give the gentleman the two fives there, on the Merchants' Bank. What's your note?"

"The Mechanics."

"Ah! let's look at it; yes, a good note—it's well to be careful now-a-days. Catharine, hand the money."

She hesitated, when Ross remarked, "I see you let your wife keep the money, and she hates to part with it. Mayhaps she thinks that of mine is not genuine."

"I don't know what she thinks!" exclaimed Gordon, throwing an angry eye on his wife. "I suppose she ought to be willing to accommodate her neighbours; she says that Mrs Baxter has been very kind to her."

"I always like to be neighbourly," rejoined Mrs Baxter, looking at Mrs Gordon, as she handed the money to Ross, while the latter rose, and said—

"I'm obliged to you, stranger—whenever I can do as much for you I'll do it. Good night to you."

"When do you go into the country? I'm going myself, and should like to have company," said Gordon, holding the light and observing the stranger closely. The minuteness of the inspection caused Ross to look steadily, but unabashed, in the eye of Gordon, and to say,—

"I don't care when, for the matter of that; if I had my horse here, I'd go to-night."

"Where is your horse?"

"At the—the Eagle, I think they call it."

"It's a fine night," replied Gordon. "I hate travelling alone. What say you to another glass? Then get your horse, and meet me here in half an hour. I expect we can trust ourselves together, and keep off bad company?"

"Agreed! agreed!" They drank over the proposition, and shook hands; Gordon staggering as they did so, for he was intoxicated, when the waggoner, on leaving the room, said to Mrs Baxter that he had left his whip in her room, and would get it. She accordingly went with him.

"Give me a pen and ink," said Ross; "I don't want to make myself known to any man at the stable, and I must take an order to him from myself. I shall say to him that I left your humble servant at the theatre. The thing works well, almost too well."

"Why run the risk of his company out into the country when you know his character?" said the widow. "Why not get some officers and take him?"

"No, he's baffled me once, and I'll show him that I can play as deep a game as he can. I know the man at the cross roads; I'll make a first-rate police report of it. He has, by his dress, entirely changed himself—he does it well too."

"Well, well; I can't but think you're doing wrong, Mr Ross," returned the widow, "and I shall lose my best friend in you."

"Must do it," said Ross. "How in the world would I have ever gotten my name—if not for daring in these matters?"

The conversation in Gordon's room was as interesting as that above.

"John," said his wife to him, "you are not going with that stranger?"

"I am, certainly—why—you are always blasting me with doubts."

"Because, my dear John, he eyed you so very closely when you were looking away from him. I don't know why it is, but I think he means you some wrong."

"A woman's reason. How does he know but what I mean him some wrong?"

"But don't do it—don't do it, John; think that here would be this woman to swear that he left the house with you—and about the money too."

"Hang the money! you gave it to him; and they can't bring the guilty knowledge home to me—and, to put you at ease, nor you either."

"John, I did not hesitate because I thought of myself—these he comes down stairs; you must do as you choose, but I wish you were more of yourself. He observed you had been drinking."

"He did, hey?—well, that's the reason he takes me to be honest; there's something in the fellow's tone that I have heard before—or it might have only been the liquor. But I tell you, if you must know, this, that I suspect the officers are after me, and if I am seen in this half-rough country dress of mine with a countryman, who'll suspect me? It's a bold stroke to be off clear to the hills. I believe I was dogged the other night to a certain place. I couldn't trust myself to come here till it was dark. Damn it! I've been in a cellar all day. This woman up stairs has never seen me before, and she don't know me in any other dress. I thought that countryman was a coming in here—it seems he's gone—did you hear him go out?"

At this moment the door opened, and the widow entered, saying she would keep them company, if they liked, till her friend returned.

Ross proceeded directly to his livery stable, rejoicing in the success of his plan, for he had no doubt that he should be enabled to hear something of the counterfeiter from his contemplated operations. He soon rapped his boy up, and gave him the order, which, as the circumstance had turned up before, and all turned out right, was instantly obeyed, and without being in the least suspected by his hostler, the great admirer of Vidocq, rode off upon apparently an errand of reckless involvement of his personal safety.

Before Ross returned to Gordon's, the latter left the house several times as if on the look out, and, on hearing the tread of a solitary horse in a brisk trot, he entered, and announced his approach.

"Where is your horse?" asked Ross, entering the room. "I stayed a bit, for I went to the market to speak to my man who sells for me."

"Up street," was the rejoinder; and, bidding the women a hasty good night, they went off together, Gordon walking by the side of Ross, with his left hand on his horse's neck until they got to a shed which stood upon a common, from which Gordon led out his animal, already caparisoned, and they rode away.

In a miscellaneous, common-place conversation, in which each tried to disguise his true character, and which was not kept up as briskly as it had commenced, owing to the rapid rattling of their horses' hoofs, our new acquaintances proceeded onward. The exercise of riding, and the freshness of the night air, which was invigorating and wholesome, though it sighed through the forest as if mourning for the green glories of summer, soon sobered Gordon; and, not having the most distant recollection of what had occurred, a morbid suspicion was possessing his mind, which was not only part of his mental constitution, but which was greatly increased by the decaying excitement of his frequent potations.

Gordon broke a long silence, after they had proceeded some ten miles, by observing:

"A damn good horse that of yours, stranger—as far as I can see he's well kept; you must be fond of a nag."

"Did you ever see a farmer that was not? I love a horse next to my wife and children—don't you?"

" Better, maybe," rejoined Gordon. " I say, stranger, here's a house—a bit of a tavern, I suppose; yes, there are waggons—and there's a light in the bar-room—they be in early to-morrow—suppose we alight, and take something?"

" No, I believe not," replied Ross.

" Well, you can do as you like; I can't stand this night air without something. I've been taking too much this day or two."

" I'll wait for you; there, the bar-doer is just opened, so ther'll be not much rapping." Alighting with a dogged step, Gordon trod heavily into the bar-room and closed the door after him. In a moment afterwards he came out with a glass of brandy in one hand and a light in the other, and said to Ross:

" Here—I never drink alone."

Ross accepted the glass, and, as he put it up to his lips, Gordon exclaimed involuntarily:

" By heavens! I know that horse—how came you with him?"

The assumed waggoner, or farmer, started, but recovering his self-possession, instantly replied: " I thought, stranger, that you were a going to charge me with stealing him; I bought him this morning from a chap they call Ross—a peace officer, I believe."

" I'm a judge of horse flesh," said Gordon after a pause, which did not suffer Ross to be entirely at his ease, " and I thought I had seen the animal before. Will you smoke?"

" No, I thank you."

" I'll be with you, then, in a moment," observed Gordon, and he entered the tavern and returned with a segar, when he mounted his horse, and they rode on to the cross roads. A brisk ride soon took them to it. The regular road to Springdale was here crossed by another, which led through the valley at the foot of the hills, and formed a part of that which our readers may remember was called the " Old Road," and which our early acquaintances, Pompey and Bobby, trod the night of Mr Elwood's husking match. The tavern, which stood at its junction, was not remarkable for its respectability, though it was well known if not much frequented. The keeper of the establishment did not bear the best character.

Gordon alighted at the door, and thundered away with the butt-end of his whip for some time before there appeared any indications of inhabitancy, saving the fierce yelping of a cur mingled with the growl of a large house-dog. At last a gruff voice asked from a window up stairs—

" Who's there?"

" Tell him, stranger," said Gordon to Ross, " for I expect he knows you better than me."

" Travellers," shouted Ross.

" Got no accommodations, my friends—it's now hard unto the morning; you'd better ride on."

" Can't do it," said Gordon, and after a considerable parley the door was sullenly opened, and our companions entered. The host, after consulting with his wife, who occupied together a bed-room adjoining the bar, which also served for a parlour, said that he could give them beds in a room back of their's, but they'd have to take them as they were. This was assented to by the travellers. Ross asked to be shown to it, when Gordon said he would look after his beast, and went out accordingly, remarking:

" I'll soon be back—I'm sleepy."

Ross lifted a light which the landlord offered him, on the promise that he himself would attend to his beast, and entered his bed-room. Gordon took a light from a remaining candlestick, and, placing it in a dark lantern, bade the landlord show the way, which the publican did. As the latter went before, Gordon stepped without noise to the window of the room in which Ross was, and looked through at him intensely. He observed his companion place his hand in one of the beds which trembled, and look inspectingly around. His false whiskers had gotten away so as to exhibit his natural ones, and his wig was somewhat in the same predicament.

" Ross," muttered Gordon through his clenched teeth. " Yes, it's Ross; he's feeling to see if the nest's warm—the bird's off. My brave bully of a constable, you're nearer your last home than I am. Damn this liquor—it will ruin me yet."

Stepping away from the window, Gordon entered the stable after the tavern keeper, and said, " Hall, where's Tom?"

"He didn't think all was fair," replied Hall, in a whisper, "and he left his bed through the back door while I was opening the front one for you."

"Do you know that man in there, Hall?"

"No; I didn't notice him particularly; a friend, ain't he? you brought him."

"It's Ross, the constable."

"Damnation, is it?"

"Yes; his time's near over. Let's shoot him through the window."

"No; no such things in my house. What, if some of these market folks should hear the crack of the pistol?"

"I don't care who hears it. He's on my track after me like a bloodhound and, he carries it off as if there was nothing but fun in it. It takes two to play that game. No man's life is safe with such a dare devil as that after him. Where's Tom?"

"Up in the loft, I expect."

"Tom," said Gordon, ascending the ladder, and speaking in an eager whisper.—"Tom, I say."

"Come to me if you want me—some one may be below," whispered a voice, lower and more eager than Gordon's.

Gordon obeyed the request, and, passing along, felt amidst the hay for Tom's hand, and found it grasping a pistol.

"That's right—you're ready: there's treason somewhere, Tom."

"And on my trail," said Tom, gritting his teeth.

"How did you hear it?"

"From Benbow's account of Ross searching his house—from their being after you. It's that matter of your own at Springdale with that cripple and the gal that's did the thing. I waited here to-night for the boys to come with my share of the notes, and I'm off to Canada or some other diggings. The devil's delight is kicked up."

"I'll go with you!" exclaimed Gordon, "if you assist me to revenge myself on Ross; he's in Hall's now."

"In Hall's now?" whispered Fenton, springing up, "then we're done for. I lay my life he's in this very barn—ruin, ruin."

"No, he suspects nothing; he's disguised as a farmer."

"Disguised as a farmer—here, and suspects nothing," muttered Tom.

"He's after me, then—and only me."

"Do your own revenge then, Jack."

"Ah! speak low; but he's been after you before to-day."

"Yes, the pair of us. He ought to have his throat cut."

"And we ought to do it; low, speak low. Bully Ben and Pounder, you say, will be here to-night."

"They ought to be here now—hush. Hall will leave a sign out to let them know things are wrong there to-night, and they'll come round the back way here. Bully will make a sign of a cat's mewing."

Tom had scarcely whispered the remark when the sign was made and returned by his scratching against the wall.

In a few moments the counterfeiters were huddled together in the straw, and were made acquainted by Gordon with the facts familiar to our readers. Besides Gordon and Fenton, there were met Bully Ben, Pounder, and Hall.

Hall objected sternly to any violence in his house.

"All this trouble was brought in the camp from you, Gordon," he said, "and that Benbow business."

"All from me!" said Gordon,—"all from Ross."

"I must leave you," said Hall; "he'll suspect something; you all know what he is."

"I know what he is," muttered Bully Ben through his teeth. "He had me, against all law, beat nearly to death, to make me confess—when I had neither judge nor jury. And when I sued him afterwards, he got off by denying it, though I swore plumply to it. I was handled worse 'an a nigger, and I'm for revenge—revenge. Let's take him to the cave."

"Agreed," said Gordon; "the cave. Hall shall entice him in the front room—no; I'll go

in, and while he's in bed you must make a rush on him." These plans were all matured so as to have Tom at the window to shoot him if he attempted to escape through it, while Pounder, Bully Ben, and Gordon, were to make him captive in the room. Gordon then entered the house with a careless whistle, and found him seated by the table, reading:

" You take it coolly, my new friend, after such a hard ride," said Gordon, throwing himself on his bed carelessly.

" Always do," replied Ross.

" What may be the matter that you're reading?" inquired Gordon.

" I picked up the book after you left, stranger—it's called the adventures of Burrows, the counterfeiter."

" Ha! a great scoundrel."

" That's as men think, my friend," replied Ross, " just as men think: The lawyers cheat their clients—the brokers the banks—the banks the people, and the counterfeiters all. But counterfeiting is a componer trade than you think—many a fair-cheeked girl is but a counterfeit, and sails like a pirate, and counterfeiters are land pirates, under false colours. How many men do you think wear false whiskers and false hair?"

" You for one," said Gordon, wondering why his comrades did not enter, and mad at their delay.

" Certainly, Gordon, my friend," resumed Ross, without testifying the least surprise, " and both of us false clothes—business is business."

" But you're done for, hang you!"

" No, that's going too fast, Gordon; never count your chickens before they're hatched—you're, maybe, my prisoner!"

" Not exactly; here"—through the window—" Tom!" exclaimed Gordon, and as he spoke sprang to his feet, while Bully Ben and Pounder rushed in. Ross made no attempt to escape or to draw his weapons. His entire coolness astonished the gang into inactivity. Bully Ben held a pistol in his hand, but made no attempt to use it.

" Done like men, gentlemen!" exclaimed Ross; " done like men—and, let me add without complaint, gentlemen who scorn to attack a foe with odds."

" You attacked me with odds," cried Bully Ben, " when you had me thrashed in that style."

" But it was in the way of business, Ben; and I gave you a hint afterwards that saved you—confess the fact."

" You said you did," retorted Ben, " but I don't believe you had the proof against me."

" Clear—conclusive; but it's wrong in you, gentlemen, to quarrel with me; you seem to think me a natural enemy—not so: I never arrest a man unless I am satisfied that I can convict him—and not always then. There's policy in war—and now, as we're at peace, there's no policy."

" Ha, ha! well, you are a buster!" exclaimed Pounder.

" Precisely," replied Ross, " we're all busters, as you call them; if we are great men in our line—bays, you're busters too—Bully Ben's a buster, and as to Gordon here, he's a buster equal to the biggest of you."

" But what makes you pursue me in such a way, like a hell-hound?" asked Gordon.

" A great mistake, Jack," retorted Ross; " didn't we part fair friends that night at Benbow's? had we not social glasses this very night? How know you that I've anything against you? No; you have a greater enemy than I ever was to you."

" Who's that?" asked Jack.

" Liquor, Jack—liquor!" said Ross, emphatically.

" That's the fact!" shouted Bully Ben and Pounder, while Tom, who had entered the room, struck with the appearance of things within, and forgetting his duty at his post, remarked:

" That was into Gordon."

" Gentlemen," continued Ross, " speaking of liquor, let's have some. Gordon, how did you know me?"

" By your whiskers, Ross—by your whiskers: your false ones slipped aside."

" Damn them!" said Ross, tossing them from his head with a vexation that astonished the counterfeiters, and made them look at him with their first expression of features.

"Here, Hall," he continued, "bring in the liquor; boys, I was different game from what you thought; I have nothing against you, but against my whiskers I have a quarrel. Hall, let's have your shaving apparatus here—I'd take them off if they sat as closely to my head as my scalp."

Gordon and his companions called out to Hall to humour the joke, and preparations were made accordingly. Ross fixed his table and arrayed the lights as if he were seated in his own bed-room. He commended Hall for the neatness of his shaving cup, and said he liked the habit of burning spirits of wine in heating the water, and, as he spoke, he ignited.

"But bring the liquor," said he.

It was accordingly brought, and they all helped themselves—Gordon particularly—to a copious libation.

"Boys—or rather gentlemen, excuse the familiarity," observed Ross, pausing from the operation of lathering his most ample whiskers, "as I expect you always mean to continue in your present honourable profession, may you live the full measure that the law allows, and die as it points out. I'll give you three pieces of advice, which I have learned in my observations: Firstly; as the preachers would say, never take an accomplice where you can do the deed without—accomplices entertain often suspicions of each other, and in that way we constables come to find you out. A fellow is always wanting to know where his accomplice is, feared of being blown. Secondly; the moment you are arrested hold your tongues, and make no confessions or admissions—I know many a man so ruined. Thirdly; always send for a keen lawyer, and pay him well. And fourthly, and lastly; always keep on the best possible terms with the gentlemen of my profession. We often do each other great services—secret services that the world is not aware of, and we respect each other accordingly. In fact, our professions mutually sustain each other."

"Fact!" shouted Gordon, tossing himself on his bed.

At this moment there was heard without the rapid trampling of horses.

"We're betrayed," shouted Bully Ben, aiming his pistol at the head of Ross and firing, but wide of his mark. It would not have taken effect, perhaps, though aimed directly at the body of the constable, for that quick-witted character, before the trigger was pulled, jerked the bed-clothes round him. Bully Ben, presenting his shoulder towards the window, jumped through it, sash and all, followed by Pounder and Tom Fenton. Gordon jumped up, and staggered towards the window to follow their example, but was thrust back by Ross, and fell on the bed in a state of drunken insensibility.

"What's all the rumpus, Hall?" said Ross, stepping to the door, and calling out to the landlord, who was letting in the horsemen.

"Nothing," replied Hall, stepping up to him and replying in a whisper, "but a parcel of chaps who are larking it from Springdale."

"It's not the first lark that's nearly cost a man his life. It's morning, ain't it?"

"Yes, it's breaking."

While Gordon was peopled in drunkenness, Ross proceeded to tie him, while the counterfeiter muttered to himself: "Catharine, mind me now—we'll fix him, Tom—die dogs—hang liquor."

After accomplishing his purpose, Ross resumed his seat before the looking-glass, and finished shaving himself with great deliberation, making this internal reflection as he looked at Gordon:

"Damn him! I thought well of him until I saw his treatment to the woman. He can go it with a rush. I suppose I must take him to Springdale gaol, as that's the nearest—not very safe, though. What's that my business? all I've got to do is to cage the bird. The other fellows are clean gone, except Tom Fenton—he's got, what they say I have, the bump of adhesiveness. He'll hang about here till he's nabbed. I've that bump, by-the-by, myself, or I never should have held on so long to my whiskers." Then surveying himself in the glass, he continued: "I don't know but what I look more like a gentleman without 'em."

Ordering his breakfast in the room where Gordon lay, Ross had a knife and fork placed for his prisoner, and awoke him. Gordon glanced wildly round, while the full force of his situation broke over his bewildered faculties, and he exclaimed:

"No, no; give me brandy—brandy!"

Proceeding to get it himself, Ross handed it to him with the remark:

"I told you, Jack, it was your *worst* enemy."

Gorden gulped it down without a word; and, in a half of an hour afterwards, Ross had him seated in a waggon, which he drove himself, and conveyed him safely to the Springdale gaol.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM motives of humanity, when Ross returned to the city, which was immediately on his securing Gordon in gaol, he called to see Mrs Gordon, and break to her her husband's fate, and contribute his mite to the relief of her distress.

The afflicted woman had been out till past dinner-time, roaming the streets in the hope of getting some employment to obtain a meal, and with a vague anticipation that she might see or hear something of her former mistress, and thereby gain an opportunity, after extorting a promise from her not to do Gordon any injury, to inform her of his threats, for her gratitude to Miss Atherton was ever abiding in her memory, and like a fountain ever flowing. Her efforts had been vain in tracing her mistress, or obtaining food. She could not bear the idea of begging, and she returned to her wretched home to endure as she might the gnawings of hunger.

While she sat on her little stool, with her face buried in her hands, thinking sad thoughts, Ross, who had rapped twice unheard by her, entered the room. Its gloomy appearance, and the more than gloomy appearance of the woman, struck even his feelings, used as they were to scenes of wretchedness and sorrow. She arose, and respectfully offered him a chair. He took it, and telling her who he was, and what he was, informed her of Gordon's imprisonment in the Springdale gaol to await his trial.

"Then you were here last night?" said she.

"I was; and saw enough of you to respect you. Gordon, if you can, you should forget. I tell you plainly there is no chance for him; if he escapes an indictment for counterfeiting, and another for perjury against a boy, I think they'll sit on him the robbery of Mr Pinckney."

"Mr Pinckney? what Mr Pinckney?"

"A gentleman who is a friend of Mr Langdale, one of our richest merchants."

"Do you know, sir, where Gordon was, besides at Mr Bendow's?"

"Certainly; and I don't see what he was doing there unless to beg off from Mr Pinckney, but he was at Mr Langdale's. Jessop tracked him."

"Mr Langdale's! where is Mr Langdale's?"

"In Washington square, number _____. Maybe you'll find there the lady that you and he were talking of—your old mistress."

"Catharine looked at Ross in bewilderment, but spoke not.

"I wish I had those ten dollars to return to you; but if I must go to prison, can't you put me where John is?"

"I've no authority to take you to prison, and wouldn't exercise it if I had," said Ross.

"I did my duty in arresting Gordon, and I shall be well paid for it. I consider that I owe you ten dollars, and here they are."

"No, no; let me work for you, and repay you in that way."

"Certainly, you shall," said Ross; "here, take the money, and I'll send you round some work, or call with my wife, and see you about it."

Expressing her gratitude more by manner than words, Catharine took five dollars, refusing to take more, and Ross left her.

Fixing her scanty dress with as much skill as possible, Catharine proceeded directly to Mr Langdale's, and, entering the room, asked the servant for Miss Atherton.

"Tell her Catharine Gordon," said Catharine, "and she'll see me," looking over her dress.

Hesitating for a moment, the servant went and soon returned, telling Catharine to follow her. She was conducted to a splendidly furnished bed-room, where Miss Atherton sat in a voluptuous dishabille.

"Shut the door after you," said Miss Atherton quietly to the servant, who lingered on the

threshold. "Catharine, is that you?" she said, advancing with emotion, and taking the hand of her former maiden; "I'm glad to see you—I heard you were dead—but sorry you have so much altered. You are in distress."

"Deep, deep!" exclaimed the servant-maid, shaking all over with emotion; "in body and in soul, in heart, in health, in hope—ruined and undone for ever."

"Merciful father! what can I do for you? will money relieve you?"

"It's strange, Miss Clara, but something seems to bind me in my darkest hour to you. Gordon told you I was dead?"

"He did," said Miss Atherton. "Sit down and tell me what has happened to you? After he left you, you followed him."

"I did; but first excuse me, Miss Clara: you know the character of Gordon—he is now in gaol, at a place called Springdale, for counterfeiting and other crimes—excuse me—but can he in any way do you an injury?"

"Me an injury!—why, Catharine?"

"Because, last night, when in his cups, he—but you promise me to tell it to no one to his harm?"

"Certainly not; I'll only use what you tell me in self-defence."

"Miss Clara, I owe you so much that I am bound to tell you what he said: he threatened you, and said if he was not so much taken up with his own risk, that he could get hush-money out of somebody, whom I thought he meant you."

"Me!—where did you say Gordon was? confined at Springdale, was it not? about twenty or twenty-five miles from here. Did he ever tell you any way in which he could injure me?"

"Never," replied Catharine; "I have only been with him a few months; he left me behind in the old country. At times he would speak against you; but I don't think he liked you after you made him marry me."

"Likely—that's it. Now tell me about yourself, Catharine."

"I've not much to say, Miss Clara. After John married me, and we quit service with you, he threw off restraint, and became much wilder. We got very poor, my child died, and he took me to London, where, in a few months, after trying to make me an outcast, he abandoned me, and came to this country. I followed after him in the next ship, and after a world of trouble, and search, and sorrow—spending all the little money I had, and working for my daily bread, and roaming from city to city, and sometimes giving up in despair,—by accident I met him one day in the market in this place. He was mounted on a horse, and had several men who seemed like jockeys talking to him. He always would gamble. I went up to him, and called him aside to speak to him. He looked surprised and angry at first, and the next minute told me to say my say out before company. He then turned from me to his friends, and said, nodding his head at me, that there was game. I could not bear it—I burst into tears, and walked away. He followed me at some distance, and damned me for leaving home; but I begged and prayed with him so that at last he took me to a miserable room from the house where I was living—where—but I won't speak of his treatment to me. He has been getting worse and worse; more dissipated and more, until he is now in prison."—And the poor thing wept bitterly.

"My God, woman, why did you live with him—why did you not annihilate him!" exclaimed Miss Atherton, stamping her foot on the floor.

"O! Miss Clara, if you had loved as I have, the ground he trod upon, though it were the desert, would be more to you than paradise without him—the darkest night brighter than the brightest day—poverty, misery, and the world's scorn with him, better than the world's wealth without."

"I traced those feelings in you, or you never should have married him. I pity you from my soul. How dare any man to outrage so a woman's feelings—feelings such as yours were! Give up all notion of him, and let him die a blasted convict."

"I can't—I can't!" exclaimed Catharine. "You can't make the heart young again; the roots of the knotted oak can never be tendrils again—they can never be transplanted—in the bosom of the earth where they grew up in their strength they must be left or wither—even to expose them is withering."

" You speak truly of some hearts, I believe," said Miss Atherton, with a brow which bore the stamp of passion and power, " but not of all. I respect your womanly affection, but I trust, for the happiness of my sex, that such is to be found oftener in romance than in reality. Catharine, you must feel no false delicacy with me—I have abundant wealth, and will assist you ; were I in your situation and you in mine, remembering the past, I would both ask and expect it of you." So speaking, Miss Atherton handed her several gold pieces. " You must get whatever you want—clothes, and whatever else, and tell me. Let none of this go to see some pettifogging lawyer who won't know the first principles of the case. If there is any hope for John, I will see that he has able counsel. Come and see me to-morrow—be punctual, Catharine ; no foolish errand to Springdale to see him and let him couzen or beat your money from you ; he is better as he is ; if he has not money he will get no drink but what is good for him—and abstinence from intoxication may reform him."

Here the servant entered with a card in her hand, which she gave to Miss Atherton, which the lady looked at peculiarly, and said—

" Tell Miss Fitzhurst that I will be down in a moment ; and say to my maid I do not want her. " Catharine," she continued to Gordon's wife, " you shall fix my dress for me ; it will not be the first time, and may not be the last."

" My fingers are all thumbs now, Miss Clara," said Catharine, smiling at the memory of brighter days ; " but I'll try—the washing-tub and floor-scouring have unfitted me for such a duty. How I used to love it. You used to be easier fixed than other ladies, and never found fault."

" I am not as patient as I used to be ; but no matter—some of these days, maybe, you will be with me again, and we'll make these men behave better. No, Catharine, these plain pearl earrings, they become black—now, that solitary ring. Call and see me to-morrow, Catharine, or this afternoon—or to-night, if you feel to like it, and if I am not engaged we'll talk over other times. Be of good cheer—these men, Catharine, have a maxim, my girl, that faint heart never won fair lady, and we women must have, for our maxim, this—that faint lady never won or kept false man—so there shall be no heart in our maxim at all. Good bye."

" Good bye, Miss Clara ; God for ever bless you," said Catharine, descending the steps behind her former mistress, and dwelling upon the splendour of her peerless beauty.

The ladies met like two who had been anxious to see each other, from what they had heard mutually of the other's personal and mental attractions. Miss Atherton was some years the elder, and the impression of intellectual superiority and great womanly tact and observation sat upon her brow. Perhaps Fanny's first impression of her new acquaintance was that she was a thought too worldly in her manner ; but it passed away from her mind in five minutes. Miss Atherton thought she saw in Fanny something of what she herself had been, or might have been but for the past—something, but she felt their characters were different naturally. Though her brow was sunny as the marble when the sunlight falls upon it, yet a cloud crossed her heart when Fanny, in making the apology of her father's sickness for her delay in calling, added—

" Mr Pinckney was to have escorted me, Miss Atherton ; but some involvement of his affairs from the low price of cotton compelled him to go to Mr Mason's, the lawyer ; so I determined, as I came in expressly to see you, that I would not be deprived, by any further untoward circumstances, from making your acquaintance."

" I hope your father is better ?" inquired Miss Atherton.

" Much better. Several pleasant occurrences of late have relieved him ;" and Fanny spoke of Bobby's trial and Pompey's conduct, saying how much it had gratified her father.

" I hope Mr Pinckney's loss is not great ?" inquired Miss Atherton.

" I don't know exactly its extent," rejoined Fanny, who, not knowing why, could not refrain from blushing.

" Caught," thought Miss Atherton to herself ; " she'll have him if he were penniless ; she's proud, and would be proud to show her disinterested love. Pinckney has not told her of ourselves—pride again."

This thought of the instant passed through her mind, when she asked Fanny if she had ever heard of Gordon, the counterfeiter. In reply to which inquiry Fanny gave an account of his conduct to Peggy and Bobby, and of his desire to marry the former. After a very long

call, Fanny took her leave, pressing Miss Atherton to call and see her soon, and explaining that they were not spending the winter in the city in consequence of her father's gout.

"I promise you," replied Miss Atherton, "that the first fair day—day like this—that occurs, the day after to-morrow, if it's that day, I will ride out and see you. I am determined, if you will allow me, to know you well." They shook hands and parted.

"A beautiful woman," thought Miss Atherton as she viewed her own fair proportions in the glass; "beautiful—and my good friend Howard has caught her heart. Can he have lost his fortune—no, I don't believe—would I be very sorry? I ought to be. It will require a woman of more determination of character to make a distinguished man of Pinckney than my visitor. Can't I get him back? he treats me with so much the air of an escaped bird that won't be caught again. I must to Springdale; I must know something about this Gordon. I suspect, and—I wonder if Howard had any particular feeling other than the call of business which kept him away."

Her reverie was interrupted by the announcement of Pinckney's name. He entered, and looked black when on inquiry he learned that Miss Fitzhurst had called and left. He staid but a few moments, and took his leave.

"He tries my woman's temper to the uttermost," soliloquised Miss Atherton, when the door closed on him—"to the uttermost—why he was once the creature of my smiles."

Fanny expressed herself to Pinckney in the most unbounded terms of admiration of Miss Atherton. "Howard," she said, laughing, "you'll make me jealous if you go there much."

"Ah! I fear, Fanny, that I not only shall not go there, but shall be absent from you for two or three weeks. My affairs, I believe, will compel me to go to New York. I am in hopes that my visit will make all right. That Mr Mason is certainly a splendid man; it is a treat to talk with him and Langdale. I wish often, Fanny, that I had studied one of the professions; in this country there seems to be something in the very atmosphere which requires a man to be employed. But we must go to Europe in the spring, and I will there prove to you that I have not flattered you, and show them what flowers grow in America; but your city has already shown them that."

"And, Miss Atherton."

"Yes; but her's is a beauty to please a boy—one who has not seen the world."

"O! no, not always so, Howard; think how Mr Langdale speaks of her. I shouldn't wonder if they made a match."

"Ah! would you not? I hope that Sidney will return before I go. My dearest Fanny, the pain of separation, but for so short a time, will make me feel more desolate than when I stood upon the shores of Europe an utter stranger."

In a few days Pinckney left Holly for New York. His parting with Fanny had that pleased anxiousness which we may suppose two lovers to feel who, by separate pathways that join ere long, have parted for a moment, each to pluck a flower, which they meant to present in exchange when they met again, as a token of their everlasting love, and that thereafter they should part no more.

CHAPTER XIII.

MISS ATHERTON kept her promise, and made an early return of Fanny's call. As the ride was a long one, she spent the day and night at Holly, and they had a long *tête-à-tête* together. How soon, under such circumstances, an intimacy ripens.

Saddened by Pinckney's absence, and gaining no comfort from her visits to Sarah, who was sadder, and dared not impart her feelings in sympathy, Fanny sought the excitement of the city to relieve the loneliness which, in spite of her efforts, pressed upon her heart. She made her home with Miss Atherton at Langdale's. She found, in the gay circle of fashion that Miss Atherton was all the talk—the envy of the belles, and the toast of the beaux. The admiration she excited seemed so common to her that nothing in her manner indicated her consciousness of it.

And Langdale, with his intellect and manner, and full appreciations of beauty and address in woman, how he delighted to seat himself upon the sofa between them, and spend the joyous

hours! He knew so well the art of pleasing—and he had known so much of the sorrows and selfishness of existence, that whatever could lend a charm to it he garnered with a miser's care to enjoy with a poet's sensibility. He scanned the beauties, from their silken slippers to their slightest curl of ribbon, with that feeling of delicate perception that made the minimest touch in the poetry of life a minister to his enjoyment. How quietly, yet shrewdly, he would comment upon any little trait of character he had seen exhibited in society, and with a tact that gave it the interest of a novel; or if literature was the theme, who that heard men could fancy him the keen man of the world, who knew the interest table so well, and had turned it to such good account amidst day-books and ledgers,—draymen and hogsheads? yet the truth is, that it was this contrast that gave such a zest to his enjoyment of the society of his inmates; and how quickly he anticipated any little want in his household which would or might contribute to their gratification; the fanciful bird-cage and its glittering inmate, if it struck his eye in the street, was so unostentatiously, if attainable, conveyed to his home. The richness of the hot-house, the varieties of the exotics, some beautiful specimen of statuary, some rare fossil, some glorious painting, if met with, he made his own, to contribute if but to a moment's pleasure. And amidst it all the cares of business clouded his brow not an instant, or gave to his thought and presence of mind the least abstraction. If some merchant-friend dined with him, whose soul was wrapped up in sordid traffic, Langdale continued the conversation, not only to make him pleased with himself, but amusing to his inmates; and when he left, with what a quiet good humour he would trace some trait of his character, or tell some tale of him on 'Change, but without the least malice—scandal he despised.

Miss Atherton, who had seen the world thoroughly and in its highest circles, would often wonder to herself over his powers of pleasing, while Fanny, in listening to him, would forget for the moment even Pinckney.

One day, when Fanny and Miss Atherton were together in the latter's chamber—it was one of those gloomy days of autumn when the fire looks so pleasant within and everything so unpleasant without—on such a day, while Fanny was busied with a bit of fancy work, Miss Atherton was busy in rummaging in her trunks among a number of letters and trinkets, when, looking up, she said :

" Fanny, what a dull day—it's enough to give one the horrors to look out; yet everything within, nevertheless, is not unjoyous. It's a day that makes one look black; don't you think so? I always call them your confidential days."

" That's a good term," replied Fanny; " 'tis strange, indeed, how our feelings change with the weather. I can't say that I have been moping all the morning, but I have a kind of pleasing thoughtfulness upon me. From your pile of letters, and your being a single lady I can judge what kind of reminiscences you are calling up."

" As to that, maybe you are mistaken—but here I have a whole trunk full of letters—from belles and beaux—friends and foes; from foolish old lords and gay young gentlemen—even down to a servant maid. Are you fond of poetry?"

" Very, indeed."

" I suppose every young gentleman who rhymes thinks he writes poetry. Here's a scrap from a certain gentleman to a certain friend of mine, upon the gentleman's understanding that the lady was engaged. It is called :

RESPONDENCY.

I'm sad : there is a pall of gloom
Above me in the sunny sky,
As if the spirits of the tomb,
With their dark train were sweeping by.
I feel like him, whom tyrant's chain
Bound to the dead in days of old;
I feel my pulse in heart and brain—
In the world's contact growing cold.
I'm sad: for thy sweet dreams tonight,
Fair spirit of my song and wail,
Not bither will they take their flight,
Or spread around me their control:
Another has thy plighted vow,
And soon the yielded hand he'll take,
And press the kiss upon thy brow.
And thou for him will thou forsake
The world—and he for aye will be—
The old, and the world's law to thee.

I'm sad: for had we met before
Ere yet that plighted vow was broken,
I might have—but no more, no more—
I bear within the bitter token.
I might have loved thee with a love
Which even in despair is true,
Which day by day should seek to prove,
Daily the deeper debt were due.
I might have loved thee as he loved
Who gave the world for smile like thine,
And marked its changes all unmoved
If I had clasped thy hand in mine.
I might have loved thee, and thy smile
Had sung a blessing on my brow,
As deep in the darkening wile
That dwells upon my spirit now.
I might have loved thee, might I do
As much as though I now might woo.

"There, don't you think that gentleman loved and meant to love, though hopelessly?" exclaimed Miss Atherton, laughing, and laying the MS. on the table beside her.

"It sounds in that fashion," replied Fanny; "and I like what seems to be the intenseness of his feelings."

"Feelings! now, Fanny, do you think that any one ever sat down to write poetry who felt at the time?"

"So the writers of it say," replied Fanny; "and I can fancy nothing more natural. We see a friend to unburden our hearts to; and why not, when we have no friend, to make our pen one—as somebody talks of a lover breathing his mistress's name to the flowers."

"Oh! you are thinking of Hudibras," exclaimed Miss Atherton:

"I'll carve your name on barks of trees
With true-love knots and flourishes."

Fanny blushed, and Miss Atherton continued: "Listen to this; here's an extract from the same writer, but in humble prose:

"Whom could I love but thee! In the world I've left behind me—a wide continent through which I travelled—I saw none who for a moment attracted my attention. Here, in this bright land, where beauty assumes its loveliest forms, and borrows all the graces of poetry and the arts—the cultivation of centuries—still I passed on indifferent to the living, though not to the dead, until I saw thee—then whom could I love but thee? and from that hour, of whom else have I thought? Why do I linger here when friends are calling me to my distant home, sunny as this, but that thou art all the world to me, and I have no home but in thy smile! Last night, when I saw you with the gay flatterers around you, to whom you listened seemingly with so pleased an ear, whose ear did I seek if not thine—and was it not deaf to me? why, sometimes, then have you smiled on me? was it with the Syren's wish to beckon through flowery path to destruction? yet but smile if you only act it, let me but be near you—

"Let me but breathe
The blessed air that's breathed by thee,
And whether on its wings it bear
Healing or death, 'tis one to me."

"In the name of mercy!" exclaimed Fanny, smiling, as Miss Atherton stopped, "what became of that swain forlorn?"

"What became of—him! he's still in flesh, I presume—still in flesh—men have died and worms have eaten them, et cetera. Don't you think a schoolboy, upon the instant, could finish the quotation? 'but not for love.' Listen to this:

"Hope has been called a flatterer—a sycophant; yet she is the only sycophant and flatterer who forsakes not the wretched, but whose smile grows warmer as their wretchedness increases. To all the living she is a bosom friend, and she forsakes not even the dead, for she haunts the graves of the departed, and visits the sleepless pillow of the bereaved with the promise that the severed shall meet again. And O! after such a promise how sweetly slumber visits the eyelids of that lonely one. Then why am I so forsaken that she comes not to me? In vain I court her smile, and solicit her to promise me, when you frown upon me, one impulse of cheerful existence for the future. But no! she acts towards me as your slave, and you forbid her to visit me with even a whisper that is gladdening. Oh! beloved—"

"Read the name out," interrupted Fanny; "read the name out, oh! beloved Clara."

"Could you think," exclaimed Miss Atherton, "that so hopeless a youth would dare to practise the profanity of using such a beloved one's Christian name? No! were it you, he'd have to say 'Oh! beloved Miss Fitzhurst.' If hope had been your slave as he represents, and you had told her to smile upon him, then it might be 'Oh! beloved Fanny.' Our sex seldom rise to the dignity of the solitary surname, such as Cæsar, Washington, Napoleon, except in mythology; for instance, Hope—she's a female and flirt, and yet we always call her plain Hope."

"The sex is known by the character without the designation," said Fanny, laughing. "I wonder if ever she fluttered into this gentleman's presence again! Do let me see a scrap of his hand-writing—they say it shows the character, and I fancy his must be excessively tremulous—that scrap of rhyme, if it has not the name."

"Yes, it is a tremulous hand," replied Miss Atherton, handing to Fanny the MS. of the lines on 'Despondency' with a careless hand, but a peculiar smile.

"Astonishing!" exclaimed Fanny: "how much the hand-writing is like that of Howard—of Mr Pinckney. And his initials!" said she, in a faltering tone, dropping the paper from her hand. "Deceived, and so cruelly!"

"Miss Fitzhurst, how agitated you are!" exclaimed Miss Atherton, in a tone of apparent alarm. "I regret exceedingly that the discovery of this secret, or, I should rather say, this mere fact, should so much agitate you. I did not fancy that Mr Pinckney was other to you than an acquaintance; and you must do me the justice to say, under what I presume are existing circumstances, that it was your joke upon his hand-writing, and your expressed wish to see it, that caused me to show it; besides, hand-writings, now I reflect, may be alike, and this you are not certain, are you, this is Mr Pinckney's?"

"You know it is—but no matter—it is immaterial," said Fanny, making an effort to resume her work. "Read on."

"Not for worlds!" exclaimed Miss Atherton: "not for worlds! I assure you, Miss Fitzhurst, that there is nothing in my feelings and relations towards Mr Pinckney which does not leave him free as air. Whatever rights of explanation there are arising from this unfortunate little incident, they rest entirely between you and Mr Pinckney. Indeed, if I had for a moment fancied the possibility of anything unpleasant to your feelings occurring in this careless examination of my trunk, I would have locked it up for ever, and have thrown the key into Lethe. I repeat, therefore, that there is nothing in my feelings or relations towards Mr Pinckney which does not leave him perfectly free to act; and if you feel yourself so placed towards him—it never crossed my brain for a moment as to need of him an explanation—I beg and pray of you that you will mention the precise manner in which you discovered his communication to myself. Among those many packages which you see there spread out, which, as I told you, are from a variety of persons, from lords to waiting-maids, it was by the merest accident I chanced to light upon a stray letter of his; one of the extracts was not his—and I forgot that he was not now in Europe. These little effusions have no effect upon myself; I look at them as the offerings of a gallant, gay young gentleman, who was then fresh from the poets, and who would not write so wildly now, though he might be truly and devotedly in love. I thought you looked at them in that light yourself, for you may remember we laughed heartily over them—not that they are not remarkably well written, but from their excessive professions of hopeless attachment. I hope you thoroughly comprehend my feelings in this matter, Miss Fitzhurst?"

"Thoroughly," said Fanny, "thoroughly."

"Indeed, Fanny, I hardly knew how to advise you. I had heard that Mr Pinckney was attentive to you; so I have heard that Mr Bradley was. Mr Pinckney I had heard so often here and in other places given away, that I continued to hold him a gallant devoted to our sex at large. Indeed, I do not know how to advise you."

"To whom else have they given him?" asked Fanny, trying to force a smile.

"To whom?—such things so escape my memory. Ah! I have heard Colonel Bentley say, by-the-by, a friend of your family's, Fanny, that he thought at one time, to use his expression, that our Lothario was smitten with Miss Grattan; so you see how utterly ignorant I was that the discovery of his hand-writing in badinage to anybody could give you a moment's uneasiness. I dare avow, now, that Mr Pinckney, in his interviews with you, never mentioned that he knew me abroad but cautiously—did he?"

"He did not—but—"

"Hear me one moment, Fanny. No one has ever heard me speak of him in any way but as a Lovelace. Your brother, intimate as they are, I do not believe ever heard him mention my name, except as one that he had met and admired; not even in his letters from abroad where he was, with the same pen and ink in his hand with which he wrote to him, puzzling his brain to concoct these billet-doux to me. Pardon me—but I think I can guess a little at what may have been understood by you with regard to his feelings towards you, but you never heard him mention me but as a casual acquaintance."

"No, never. Don't let's talk in this way—it's nothing," said Fanny, deeply blushing.

"Well," resumed Miss Atherton, "to show you the light in which I view these little com-

munications, I have never mentioned to a soul that he ever showed me any attentions abroad whatever. In truth, it would be excessively unpleasant to me to have my name brought into the matter in any way. Should it be, let me not be thought too urgent in requesting—in repeating the request—that you will fully explain my innocent and unconscious agency."

"It's wearing late," said Fanny, rising; "it is time for us to prepare for dinner;" and she arose from her seat, when Miss Atherton took her hand, and impressing a kiss upon her brow, walked with her to her chamber door.

Poor Fanny! compressing her lips together, she leaned against her bed in speechless agony for several minutes, when, by a strong resolution of her will, she made her toilet, and entered the withdrawing room a moment after Miss Atherton, where she found Mr Langdale standing by her side, while she was preparing to play on a most tasteful harp which that gentleman had just purchased.

"Are you unwell, Miss Fitzhurst?" said Langdale to her on observing her pale brow.

"No, sir; not at all."

"A little sorrowful only," said he; "then come, coz, play for Miss Fitzhurst Moore's beautiful song—'O soon return.'"

"No; let me sing you a song of your friend, Mr Pinckney, which was written abroad, and was popular with the Americans there. I like the tune, if I don't believe entirely in the hopelessness of the sentiment."

So speaking, she sang the following lines, to which Langdale listened attentively, attracted, as he was, not only by the gracefulness of her form, which her attitude at the harp so finely developed, but by the softness of her tones and the distinctness of her enunciation, in which last particular she did not prove herself a follower of fashion.

O ! BLAME HER NOT.

Oh ! blame her not—her love was deep;
And if her heart was lightly won,
Her memory will vigil keep,
And let her be the only one.

In vain would we control the heart—
The farthest river seeks the sea;
And thus, though they be far apart,
Her fancy is no longer free.

And though but one that promise heard,
And though that promise he forgot,
The faithful maiden keeps her word—
O ! blame her not—O ! blame her not.

If heedless in the many dance,
And careless of the flatterer's tone,
Remember that indifferent glance
Is but the wish to be alone

There is no cure within the crowd,
It but renews the deep regret;
For there, when the false-hearted vowed,
She promised never to forget.

"There, sir!" exclaimed Miss Atherton, rising and bowing to Langdale's compliments, "I have christened your harp for you with your friend's song; it is a beautiful instrument of most delightful tone. I must say, of all the gentlemen I have met in two continents, that a certain coz of mine knows best how to charm his guests. Won't you endorse that, Fanny?"

"With my whole heart," said Fanny. "Mr Langdale, can you tell me when the mail goes eastward?"

"Ah!" said Langdale, "I may quote your friend and my friend's song to you, and apply it to you both—

—Thus, though they be far apart,
Her fancy is no longer free.

This afternoon, Miss Fitzhurst, at five o'clock — the mail closes at half after four. Do you know, Miss Fitzhurst that this song of our friend's, of which my fair coz seems to have exclusive possession, reminds me of a suspicion which had often crossed my mind?"

"What is that, Mr Langdale?" asked Fanny.

"Why, that our friend Pinckney, and this coz of mine, know more about each other in relation to themselves than we wot of. I have thought it often have not you?"

"Why should I?" said Fanny, turning pale.

"I cannot give any conclusive reason," replied Langdale, "but my surmises are strong. He makes me jealous, I assure you. You know your power—therefore, from a selfish motive, I beseech you keep him closer to your side when he returns."

Miss Atherton struck the keys of the harp, as if she were unconscious of what was said, and, dinner being announced, they each took an arm of Langdale, and proceeded to the dining-room.

Fanny in vain endeavoured to make a show of dining. As soon as she could she withdrew to her chamber, and after gazing vacantly into the street for some time, she took pen and paper, and addressing Pinckney, wrote as follows:

"Miss Fitzhurst's compliments to Mr Pinckney, with the return of the presents and letters she has received from Mr Pinckney. She hopes by the next mail to receive hers. Miss Fitzhurst would remark, that if, hereafter, either business or pleasure should bring Mr Pinckney to _____, that she considers that no courtesies heretofore existing between them will require his appearance at Holly. On the contrary, should Miss Fitzhurst and Mr Pinckney ever meet, it must be on the footing of entire strangers."

Making up a package of his letters and presents, and enclosing them in the above, Fanny called her servant, and giving him the means to pay the postage, ordered him to take it immediately to the post-office. This done, she locked her door, and, throwing herself on her bed, gave loose to her bitter feelings.

Miss Atherton was standing at the front door as the servant descended the steps, where Langdale had just left her, and observing the letter in his hand, she asked:

"Ay, John, is that for me?"

"No, miss," he replied, holding up the letter so that Miss Atherton could read the direction; "it is a letter that Miss Fitzhurst has ordered me to put into the post-office."

"You had better make haste then, John, or you will be too late for the mail;" and the servant hastened on his errand.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Gordon was committed to gaol he summoned all the energies that guilt and inebriety had left him to escape the consequences of his crimes. He inquired of the gaoler the morning after his commitment if Mr Bronson was in the village, and learned from him that that worthy had been absent from Springdale some time, and had not yet returned. Daily he made the fruitless inquiry, and almost moment by moment he was casting his eyes round the walls of his prison devising some mode of escape; but his appalled heart throbbed thick with the consciousness that without assistance, strongly ironed as he was, even that gaol, so inferior in strength to the city gaol, would hold him until justice consigned him to the penitentiary.

He wondered if to that unguarded prison window Bully Ben, or Pounder, or Tom Fenton, would not come in some deep dark midnight to save him.

"No, no!" he would soliloquize; "they have not the heart; and if they had, they lay the break upon me—and here they will leave me to my fate. Damn them! if they were here and I were free, they might watch awhile for my coming;" thus, in speaking his feelings towards them, forgetting that he was portraying very naturally what theirs were to himself. Then he thought of his abused wife, and tried to devise some means of making her acquainted with his situation; believing, notwithstanding his brutal conduct towards her, that she might be induced to convey him secretly some instrument whereby he might effect his liberation.

After Bobby's deliverance, the man who had committed the assault and battery, the only other prisoner then in gaol, had been released; and in his gloomy and silent solitude Gordon felt it would be relief if he could hear the clanking of any other fetters in unison with his own. As he lay upon his miserable mattress, the intense solitude which sometimes would reign over the quiet village would press upon his brain like the weight of mountains, and he would impudently toss up his hands as if to remove it. The least sound that came to his ears was welcomed, for it relieved his mind in his efforts to divine what occasioned it. The solitary mouse that stole across his prison-floor he tried to allure nearer to him with crumbs of bread thrown as noiselessly to it as the feathers full of the snow; and when the motion of his hand would start the little piffler back again, he would groan in the anguish of his guilt, and fancy even the tiny animal knew the depravity of his heart, and shunned him because he was friendless.

His nerves were utterly unstrung by his long course of dissipation, and he would fancy in the midst of day that darkness encompassed him, and ten thousand fiends were heaping living coals of red-hot fire upon his heart. O! how the poor wretch begged, and begged in vain—for it was against the regulations of the prison—for a little brandy, to give him nerve. At other times, in the midst of the night he would fancy it broad day—but a strange, unnatural day, in which the sunbeams whirled and whisked about him like witches in a dance. Sometimes they would assume the shape of spirits in air; and it seemed wonderful to him how their features, in smallest miniature, not bigger than a pin's point, could be so distinct; while he wondered how they could swell and bloat, and become loathsome and reptile-like, and come and crawl upon, and thrust their forked tongues in his face, and belch forth breaths of fire, or putrid rotteness. They seemed to creep into the soles of his feet, and into each finger, and steal into his veins and revel in his blood, until they gathered at last in one great knot about his heart, and fed upon it—while the hair of his head became living serpents, and stung his eyes out. At other times he would fancy that a fair spirit of light descended from heaven into his room—a visitant of mercy, who bade him confess, repent, and go free; and when he had confessed all his crimes, she would turn into a denouncing angel, an accuser before the High Judge, and she would pour forth the vials of wrath upon his head, and he saw the mountains reeling and rolling towards him, yet they would not cover him, and could that feeble hand hold them from hiding him! the feeble hand of Granny Gammon!—O! how distinctly she wore that death-in-life look—that countenance when she cursed him.

Again he would fancy that little dogs with club feet danced round his couch; they were so comical that he laughed till his bones ached. There was one little black fellow, with a stiff, pompous, curled-up tail, that led him through the hills, and by aunt Agnes, and by Holly, and took him to the tree where he met Peggy the night of her grandmother's death. Instead of being angry with him she was all delight, all joy, all willingness, and she had a little bird in her hand that sang so sweetly. While he played with the bird, she plucked flowers—yet it seemed strange to him how he could tell their colours so distinctly by the starlight,—but he could; and she made them into garlands, and in graceful dalliance wound them round his waist; in humility and in token of respectful attention and love, she kneeled and bound them round his ankles; she begged and implored him not to be angry with her, when he drew back his foot to spurn her from him, but a sudden pain prostrated him to the earth, and, lo! she had bound him in fetters. Then the little black dog with the curly tail kept getting larger and larger, and at last he got a livery suit on him, and turned out to be old Pompey, while the bird proved to be Bobby, who whistled for joy.

Then Ross, the constable, and he took a ride, and he stopped to drink, but Ross would not; and after he had drank Ross proposed a race, to see which could ride to the devil fastest, and he agreed; and they dashed on up hill and down dale through Springdale, and away past the cross roads. They mounted at last a steep precipice, and they were spurring side and side, neck and neck, when Ross gave Gordon's horse a cut with a baboon's tail which his whip turned into, which made his steed spring ahead clear over the precipice into the bottomless pit of brimstone. Ross peeped over, and laughed at him till the woods echoed.

Then his wife came, and she looked so kindly on him. She leaned over the precipice, and stretched out her hand to save him. Their fingers touched. O! what a glow of joy thrilled through him; but just as she was about to pluck him as a brand from the burning, Ross threw a rope made of counterfeit notes round her, and drew her back, while the fiends clapped their hands for joy, and laughed till the hills and valleys echoed with their malignity.

Then Ross called to him, and told him that if he had one single cent wherewith to pay toll of good money, that he should come forth scot free; and Gordon thought he turned his pockets inside out in search of the half-dollar that his wife gave him, but he had spent it in buying liquor and treating at the tavern where he and Ross stopped, and the counterfeit notes fell thick and fast around him. At last out came Ross's ten-dollar note, but a current of cool air whisked it away off, while the counterfeit ones tumbled the faster from his pocket, and, igniting immediately, gave him such intense agony as to cause him to leap madly about, at which the fiends laughed louder than ever, while his wife and Ross disappeared.

Then he thought, after a weary travel, he stopped by a shady fountain embowered in trees, and then threw himself down, and soon sunk into a sweet sleep. Awaking feverish and all athirst, he reached over for a draught, and the limpid stream turned to molten lava, and poured down his throat and burned his heart out, and he heard Ross call out in a tone of derision, "I told you, Jack, it was your worst enemy." He found himself still in the bottomless pit, with little devils skipping round him perfectly crazy with delight.

All at once they seemed to leave him at the approach of a small gentlemanly-looking little man, dressed in black. Gordon took him at first for a clergyman, but he proved to be Satan himself. Strange, but as he advanced to Gordon the bank notes under him seemed to moulder and grow cooler, and a fiendish glow of satisfaction ran through the prisoner's veins. He announced himself by taking off his hat. Gordon observed that his eye was a merry one, and though it certainly had a touch of deviltry in it, it was merry deviltry, and not very malignant. His nose was too large rather, and too much hooked, and he was bald, with a little rein of hair above his ears, and a big tuft on his forehead like the forelock of time. His hair was originally black, but, having been so long amid the flames, it had got tinged with a crispy red here and there, like the first gray hairs in the head of a gentleman growing elderly. Gordon felt proud, he knew not why.

"Sir," said this personage, with great apparent cordiality and kindness, not unmixed with respect, "you give yourself unnecessary uneasiness; most of those poor devils that were dancing about you have forfeited their souls for ever, and yet you see they are quite merry. The cause of your trouble is, that you are in a state of purgatory; you have not committed murder yet; sell me the fee-simple of your soul, and you shall go back and dwell on earth, and be as old as Methuselah. There," said he, offering notes to countless amounts, "are the means to gratify all your wants!" As Satan offered them, Gordon thought that Peggy, Bobby, his wife, and even Pompey, with tearful eyes, besought him not to take them—but he stretched out his hand. Then the shade of his mother appeared to him, and in tones of unutterable woe, prayed him to touch not.

"But you have always disobeyed your mother," said the tempter; "why should you mind her now?" Then the voice of granny Gammon called to him that she would take back her curse if he would forbear.

"Forbear! why should you forbear?" cried out Satan; "it will give you revenge on all your enemies!"

"Give me the money," cried Gordon; "I'll seal the bond with my heart's blood."

With tears and wailing his mother and the rest disappeared, while Satan plunged a flaming pen into his breast, and drawing it out, dripping with blood, bade him seal the bond. He did so, and throughout all the regions round them was a yell of delight. Gordon felt proud. He thought he said to them in the language of the player whom he had seen enacting Byron's 'Manfred'—"Back, ye baffled fiends—" and he laughed himself so loudly that he was startled at the echoes of his own tones.

Then he thought he trod the earth again in the hot fulfilment of his revenge. How his soul revelled in its purposes! how he thought he would scourge Pompey—and he made the motion of a blow with his arm; how he would gloat over Peggy, who should cringe at his feet, while Bobby stood impotently by.

He thought he stopped at Springdale, and ordered a dinner and wines, while the landlord, and even the Fitzbursts and Pinckney, fawned around him. With what an air he ordered his bill!—Lo! when he had pulled out the bank notes for which he had sold himself to pay it, Ross arrested him for passing counterfeit money, and he was thrown into Springdale gaol. There his wife came to see him, when, maddened with her because she had not brought him the means of escape, he dashed her brains out against the wall.

In an instant he was transported back again into the bottomless pit. O! what a thrill of horror ran through his heart as a hollow voice called out:—

"You are mine for ever and for ever."

He started up from his prison floor. He felt the walls to convince himself of his locality. He grasped his limbs all over, and every feature of his face, to satisfy himself that he was still in the flesh. He struck his manacled hands against his brow till the blood gushed from his nostrils, and as he felt it trickling forth he threw himself back on his dungeon floor, and thanked God fervently that he was still on earth, though a prisoner and guilty.

CHAPTER XV.

One morning, when Gordon had just recovered from one of those terrible visitations which almost amounted to madness, at an unusual hour, for it was not yet time for his mid-day meal, the wards of his prison doors were updrawn, and the gaoler conducted into his presence no other person than Mr Bronson.

That worthy stepped back as he gazed on the haggard face of Gordon, on which the light from the solitary window fell with strong and contrasting force. He could hardly recognise in his altered features the reckless sportsman who was in the habit of lounging about his store.

Gordon nodded his head to Bronson in token of recognition, and, turning to the gaoler, asked—" For God's sake, put lighter fetters on me than these—and give me a little brandy, just a drop, or some opium—laudanum."

" Gordon!" exclaimed the gaoler in an angry tone, " you are the most aggravatingest feller I ever had to deal with. You want me turned out of my sitivation as gaoler to this 'eré establishment, don't you? I've told you fifty times afore that the sheriff says to me—you know, Mr Bronson, that our sheriff is a man of mettle and stern, an' he always keeps his word—Pike, says he to me, put the heaviest fetters in the gaol on that Gordon, and grant him no indulgences whatever, saving what the rules allow; if he escapes you lose your place."

" Why should he feel that way towards me?" asked Gordon.

" That's the question you must ask yourself," replied the gaoler. " Our sheriff is a first-rate gentleman; but he's notional—very notional indeed, and once he gets a notion into his head there's no getting it out. To Bobby Gammon, from the first, he gave all kinds of indulgences. Why, he used to make me let that black feller Pompey in here to see him. My notions are, that every man what has the keys turned on 'im for a particular offence should be treated alike."

" Why should he dislike me?" said Gordon again. " I never electioneered against him; I would have voted for him had I been here."

" If you had made him sheriff it would ha' been the same thing," returned the gaoler. " Now, I'm for having stand-by rules, but he told how this thing would turn out from the first; he said that Bob would get off—at least that he wasn't guilty. He thinks hard of you on that account; an' after I locked you up the first night, and went over to the tavern, I finds Ross and him together. Ross wanted to bet him a ten dollar hat that you'd break out. The sheriff said he never bet upon the discharge of his duties, but he said he didn't think you would, and he turned to me and told me to mark what Ross said; and I've got to mark it, or lose my sitivation—an' I've a wife and family."

" Well," said Gordon, " it's hard—hard—O, God!"

" It's harder for me," retorted the gaoler. " You say you can't sleep at nights; and I know you don't much, from the way I hear your fetters rattling; but, man, don't you think that keeps me awake too? Don't it make me think that you're trying to break gaol? and don't I think of the loss of my sitivation, and the sufferings of my wife and family, if such should be? Here I have thirty dollars a month, and house-rent free in the best built and strongest place in the town. The biggest storm that ever bursted couldn't face this ere establishment—you might as well just keep yourself quiet a little more o' nights. I tell you, man, you can't get out of this gaol; and, hang it, what's the use of your groaning and grunting so through the night? If you want a doctor, say so. You're not the first man that I've turned the key on in this very room—Bobby Gammon was locked up here."

" Was he?" said Gordon, starting.

" Fact sir," replied the gaoler, and turning to Bronson, he continued: " Would you believe it now, Mr Bronson, that this here feller, just 'cause he's in here for passing counterfeit money and one or two other things, though they're not down in the commitment—would you believe that sometimes at night he hollows and yells as if ten thousand devils had got hold on him? No longer an' last night I had a great mind to come down here at midnight with a cowhide, and flake him 'till he couldn't say boo to a goose. It takes it very unkind on him indeed a breaking o' my nat'r' rest in this way, particularly considering that Mrs Pike is as you

Knew she is, sir—an' I don't know at what time I may have to be off for Dr McVitie. He's frightened my wife several times; so that I thought he would hurry on the interesting event—and maybe play the devil with matters and things. Besides that, everybody in Springdale—for they can hear him plainly all through the village these still nights—thinks he does it out of deviltry—to defy them, an' disturb 'em of their natural rest, too.—There's only one person as I've heard of that defends him at all, and that's Bobby."

"What did he say?" eagerly inquired Gordon.

"Why," replied the gaoler, with a knowing grin, "he puts it own to your conscience. He says he was passing the gaol one night from a little quilting frolic at Bill Hardy's mother's, an' they heard you, and felt so for you, that his cousin Peggy stopped her ears with her hands and cried. Now you know it's all gammon, Gordon," continued the gaoler, looking at him as if he perfectly understood him, "all gammon; for last night I myself with my own ears heard you laugh the most devilishest, cunningest laugh that ever I heard tell of—my wife was certain that you were laughing that 'ere way cause you were breaking gaol and was just on the point of making off. Then you see I had to get up an' look round, an' the loss of my sitivation crossed my mind, and my wife's sitivation—and I dreamed all night damned unlucky dreams. I tell you, if you don't quit it you'll catch the worst flogging you ever heard of. Here you are, nothing to do upon earth but sleep all day and cut up your deviltries all night. Why don't you keep awake in the daytime and sleep at night? I just advise you for your own good to quit. I tell you, man, if the sheriff would only tell me once to give you a taste of my brown Betty—you know I'm used to the business—there wouldn't be a single man in Springdale that heard you who would take you to be at your deviltries then. I tell you, man, it's outragous, an' I leave it to Mr Bronson here if it ain't, to disturb a whole, large, respectable place like this in spite an' me, and considering the sitivation of my wife."

Gordon gazed half vacantly on the wall, but said not a word.

"Well, say your say," said the gaoler to Bronson and Gordon.

"Can't you let us have a little talk alone, Mr Pike?" asked Gordon. "You know, sir, that I may want to say some things to him—he's a kind-hearted man—concerning my defence, and what lawyer to employ, which in your responsible situation as gaoler it would not be proper for me to say before you."

The gaoler shook his head doubtfully.

"My respected and respectable friend," said Bronson insinuatingly to Pike, "perhaps you had better let us have a little private talk. You remember when that counterfeiter was here before, I gave him some ghostly consolation. This unfortunate man—for any man may be unfortunate—temptation is an awful snare—may wish to communicate something to me of his spiritual state, besides messages to send to his distant friends."

"Then," said the gaoler, "I must lock you up together."

"Must you?" said Bronson, starting and looking round the black and charcoal scribbled walls: "you didn't lock me up before."

"Orders strict this time, Mr Bronson; must be obeyed."

"Well, well," said Bronson; "but Pike, my respected and respectable friend, don't stay long."

"Never fear, Mr Bronson," said Pike, laughing; "never fear, there's no authority to keep you here—an' I never acts but by authority." So saying, the gaoler withdrew, deliberately locking the door after him.

Not until the last key was turned in the outer passage door was silence broken between the two, when Bronson asked:

"Gordon, what did you want with me?"

"When did you get here?" asked Gordon.

"Late last night; I saw Pike this morning just as I was going to my store, and he said you kept pestering him to come and tell me that you wanted to see me."

"Yes, yes," said Gordon.

"Well; what for?" inquired Bronson, impatiently.

"Mr Bronson, I want you to go my bail."

"Go your bail, Mr Gordon!"

"Call me Jack, call me Jack—like you used to."

"Jack, then—there's no bail—they won't allow bail. Under present existing circumstances, if they would allow bail they'd put it up so high as to swamp the biggest estate in the state; and as for taking me, they wouldn't do it."

"But will you try—will you try?" asked Gordon, half angrily, half imploringly.

"Mr Gordon," said Bronson, after some hesitation, "I don't know that you have any particular claims on me."

Gordon looked at Bronson searchingly, and said:

"Don't know! Yes, you do know, Mr Bronson."

"What are they?" inquired Bronson in a tremulous tone, approaching nearer the speaker, yet assuming indifference; "what are they? speak low."

"Mr Bronson, we often bought goods of you at a thousand times their value."

"We! what we? You chose to give me my prices—you had your money's worth."

"Money's worth! that may be—but you knew the money," replied Gordon, quickly.

"Knew the money! to be sure I knew the money: it was good money, wasn't it? "Have a care, Gordon, don't make me a witness against you," said Bronson in a friendly tone. "I may be called upon, as you have been frequently at my store. I know nothing against you—make no confession."

After a moment's pause, and a steady look at Bronson, Gordon asked:

"Where's Benbow?"

"Benbow!" exclaimed Bronson with a triumphant smile; "he's off—no one knows where. I understand, sir, that since my absence from Springdale—business took me away southward—I have been absent some time—in that time, sir, I understand that a gang of counterfeitors have been discovered, and that it was asserted that Squire Benbow was one of them. I knew him very slightly; but I can't believe it."

"You knew him well, Mr Bronson."

"Mr Gordon, I shall not quarrel with you as to what constitutes an intimate acquaintance," retorted Bronson.

Gordon's face fell. He shook impulsively his fetters, as if he would renew his courage, and then remarked:

"Mr Bronson, you knew all about us."

"Knew all about you!" echoed Bronson; "what's the use of speaking so loud? Do you want to compel me to be a witness? I assure you, Mr Gordon, I know nothing of you but what is good, and unless you inform me otherwise yourself, I have not said that I would not testify to the fact. Have you anything against me, Mr Gordon? speak it out, sir," said he, sinking his voice.

"Mr Bronson, you knew about us," reiterated Gordon.

"I am not certain that I did, sir; on the contrary," replied Bronson, "which is to your advantage; but suppose I did, it was not for me, a Christian man, who believes in mercy, and who practises it—it was not for me upon suspicion, very slight suspicion—I don't say even that I suspected—it was not for me to have the fearful penalties of the law inflicted upon a fellow-being—a frail human creature like myself."

"I'm here—I'm here I!" exclaimed Jack Gordon, in a desperate tone, "and the rest are all scattered; but I'm a desperate man. I can tell tales, you know—I can tell tales."

"Tales!" exclaimed Bronson, but in a much lower voice; "not so loud, my respected friend: what tales can you tell? Who'd believe your tales!" he exclaimed, in a more assured tone. "You are here an accused man; I don't know whether you will be convicted or not. I trust not; but who would believe your tales? It would make a man more popular if you were to tell them against him, as it did that unfortunate youth, Robert Gammon, who has grown bolder than ever since his acquittal. I wonder you don't appear against him. But you see immediately, Mr Gordon, that tales are nothing. There's—in all respect I say it, sir—no shifting of responsibility in these matters. Tales have advanced that Robert Gammon in this community in a manner that's perfectly astonishing. Sir, I believe they would elect him to office, were he eligible. Tales! what could they do against a man like me, Mr Gordon? I am a member of the church under grace, a leading member, sir; a character unimpeached; have given greatly to the poor; and never missed from the service, unless kept back by sickness, or something unavoidable; have sustained this character for years: when I go to pur-

chase goods, bear the highest testimonials—the highest—have unlimited credit. Tales, indeed ! I want to be your friend, Mr Gordon. I trust in mercy ; and for your own sake you will not compel me to be your foe."

" Will you at any rate help me ?" said Gordon, in a tone that proved he had not much chance of operating upon his fears.

" That was spoken rightly, my respected and respectable friend, Mr Gordon !" exclaimed Bronson, rubbing his hands, and adjusting his wig—" that was in the correct tone. The rumours against you, sir, I never have believed ; I always held you to be an honest man, sir, and on all proper occasions I have said so. I shall say so again, sir, on all proper occasions. You must not be down-hearted, my friend ; I will help you—yes, I will ; and though you should be convicted, Mr Gordon, and sentenced to the penitentiary—don't let any angry feelings of the moment induce you—nor threats nor promises—to say a word against your true friends—such you shall find me to be, sir. I assure you, sir, that Robert Gammon's popularity is astonishing. But as I was about to remark, even though they should send you to the penitentiary, remember the governor has the power of pardoning—ha ! don't you see—and some men that you and I know of have influence. Who, I ask you, was the very last man in this prison—ay, in this room ? Strong. What was he here for ? counterfeiting. Was he not convicted ? But did his friends despair ? Who, I ask you, Mr Gordon, got up the petition for his pardon, and rode this county night and day for signers, and got him off ? They had scarcely got his head shaved, sir, before he was off. Mr Gordon, that individual always sticks to his friends."

" You promise me, then, to do what you can for me ?" said Gordon.

" I do, sir," replied Bronson ; " be discreet, say nothing to criminate yourself or others ; for your friends that are scattered may be caught. Now I must leave you—I'll have some clothes sent to you by our charitable society ; at least, I'll get a friend to propose it, and I'll carry it through ; I'd speak to the sheriff, but we are not on the best terms—so give me your hand—God bless you ! Why don't that fellow Pike come ; does he mean to keep me here for ever ? There's such a thing as false imprisonment I'll learn him, and I believe it may be done by a gaoler as well as by anybody else. Pike, I say," he continued, kicking and shouting at the door, " Pike, O ! Pike."

Slowly the steps of Pike were heard echoing along the passage, and then the unlocking of the doors succeeded, and the gaoler stood in their presence. " Hope I didn't keep you waiting much, Mr Bronson," said Pike with a grin ; " but I stepped to the 'pothecary's for something for my wife, and left the keys in her charge. I've just got back."

" Friend Pike, whenever I can do a service to an unfortunate fellow-creature, I do it—I think it is the duty of all of us. If Mrs Pike wants any baby's clothes cheap, and of the latest pattern, ask her to call over. We shan't quarrel about the time of payment. Good-bye, Mr Gordon, be of good cheer. The Lord is everywhere, as much with you in this prison as he is in the sanctuary.

So speaking, Bronson withdrew, and, hastening out of the gaol, left Pike to lock his solitary charge up at his leisure.

After glancing round the room to see that all was right, and peering into the corner and at Gordon's manacles and himself, Pike requested him, as he valued the comfort of his bodily condition so long as he remained in that gaol, to cut up no more capers with his fetters, and not to laugh so loud when he felt disposed to merriment in the middle of the night, but just to take a quiet laugh to himself, and to reflect upon Mrs Pike's present " hainteresting sitivation." After making this admonition, the affectionate Mr Pike securely locked up his charge, and forthwith repaired to the presence of Mrs Pike, to enjoy himself in the bosom of domestic felicity, which, it appeareth, may be found even in a gaol.

CHAPTER XVI.

Proceeding to his store, and giving a hasty order to his clerk concerning certain goods which he expected to arrive from the city, Bronson, with hasty strides, left the village and hastened to Elwood's.

"Yes," he soliloquized, "this Gorden knows what he has heard his comrades say, and something himself besides; but, I thank God, there's nothing they can bring home to me. If this fellow had a character, and his comrades had ditto, they might do it—but—that was a lucky thought of mine about Robert Gammon, the little rascal; but, as it is, suppose I did sell them goods at a high price—I've a right to put my own price on my own merchandize. They can't prove any passing on me; no, no, I took care of that; but I did pass it, though; and if I did, who can prove the intention, the '*quo animo*,' as Squire Lupton says. Yet it's gathering round me; it's gathering round me. My prospects are darkening—the respectable here don't receive me as they used to—no, Bronson, they don't. I have made my mind up to it; I must and will have that girl; Elwood dares not refuse me—he would if he dare; but I hold him with a grasp of iron. Sarah was not half so civil in her reception as she used to be, not half so civil, the last time I saw her. I shall have no more diff'y-dally in the matter with her; she must and shall marry me, and Elwood shall see to it. It was lucky, lucky—I thank God I saw him—hey! Bronson, very lucky."

Thus communing with himself, and turning the same thought over and over in his mind, Bronson reached Elwood's door almost unconsciously. He found Elwood in, who received him with forced cordiality, and invited him to a seat.

"No! no!" exclaimed Bronson impatiently; "I wish to speak privately. I suppose your niece is well?"

"Tolerable. She has been quite unwell."

"Is she here?"

"Yes, in the house; won't you see her?" asked Elwood.

"No! not now. Come, walk out with me," said Bronson.

"Can't we speak here," asked Elwood, seemingly averse to leaving the house.

"No, I tell you—no! Will you walk out with me?"

"Don't be in such a heat," expostulated Elwood, and taking his hat from the floor at his feet, where he was in the habit of placing it when he took it off, Elwood followed Bronson to a secluded spot behind the barn, some three hundred yards or more from the house. As they walked along each was so occupied with his own thoughts as to make no effort to keep up a conversation. Bronson walked with dogged determination; and Elwood, as if he feared an interview which he had not the courage to deny. When they reached the spot, Bronson broke silence, by saying firmly—

"Elwood, you promised me long ago your niece. I returned last night—almost the first words I heard from my clerk were that she was attached to that infernal—the Lord forgive me—to that aristocrat young Fitzhurst. We must be married to-night."

"To-night!" ejaculated Elwood.

"To-night, or you must take the consequences."

"The consequences—the consequences!" muttered Elwood to himself, and then he said aloud: "I've told you, Bronson, that she should and would have you. I had talks with her since you have been away, and she is not so averse to it. It's a lie—a damned lie, about Sidney Fitzhurst and her being engaged. Such a thought never crossed my brain; and I've not seen them together. It's a lie."

"Sir, I tell you it's the truth; Peg Gammon and Bob say so, and they got it from that hag Agnes."

This remark did not produce the effect upon Elwood which Bronson intended—for his face brightened, and he said:

"The girl's of age, and if she will have him how can I prevent it?"

"Will have him! prevent!" ejaculated Bronson, literally gnashing his teeth. "Do you know your fate?—do you know the hemp is spun for you?"

Stung, if not startled by the remark, Elwood rejoined with courage unexpected by his companion:

"An alliance with that family would prevent the consequences of any alleged crime—deed done so long ago, and of doubtful proof."

"Doubtful proof! I like that. What I saw with my own eyes—doubtful proof!—that's something new under the sun. You'll find out whether the proof is doubtful or not."

"Bronson," said Elwood, "I've been thinking much over this matter since you have been away."

"So have I," ejaculated Bronson.

"Hear me, hear me!" said Elwood. "Your manner this morning has determined me to speak out plainly, because the crisis has come. God knows you have hush-money enough; you've a mortgage on my place for which I never got a cent; I have lent you money repeatedly which you have never paid me; and not content with all that, you would have me compel my niece to marry."

"Yes, sir, that's the word—compel!" exclaimed Bronson, who, nevertheless, was evidently surprised at the tone of his companion; for though sycophantic enough where he was compelled to be, Bronson preferred the bullying style when it suited his purposes as well. "You must do it—you're mine, body and soul. I'll deal plainly with you since you're so plain. She's your heir; her property you have used; a law-suit if she were to marry another might deprive me of this ground!" exclaimed he, in a rage, stamping his foot upon it—"of this ground, which is and shall continue mine. Why should you escape the consequences of crimes which have given others to the gallows? You think you must go scot free, he? This ground and all you're worth, had I come upon you, would have gone to fee your lawyers—every cent to fee your lawyers—and my testimony would have hung you as high as Haman, notwithstanding—ay! and it can do it! Change your tone, or it will do it. The prospect of this aristocratic marriage makes you blind as a post to the risk you've placed your neck in."

"I'm not certain of the risk," said Elwood, but in a tone that began to falter.

"Run it, then!" exclaimed Bronson, taking advantage of it. "Run it; many a man has run it before. Did I not give you myself the life of Eugene Aram to read; see how long he trod the earth with impunity. Look at that general—a general, sir, high in authority, in British authority, who whipped a soldier to death. I shall add another to the catalogue of such trials."

"But the proof—the proof was strong against them," rejoined Elwood, "and their acts were premeditated; mine were not—God knows mine were not."

"But how'll the jury know it!" exclaimed Bronson, exultingly. "Not from my testimony, I assure you—I could save you now if you were on trial—I could hang you now if you were on trial. You're a man proverbially cruel to your slaves—that's the point to start from—I appear before the grand-jury—I say that I am a religious man—that all the world knows, of unimpeached and unimpeachable character; I state that a feeling of mercy towards one I hoped would become a useful member of society prevented my making the proposed development before—but he is not, I continue, a useful member of society—reports say that his unkindness as a master increases. My conscience, therefore, compels the development. I circumstantially narrate how twelve years ago, this very month, I was passing through your woods to the mill."

"You need not speak so loud," said Elwood, glaring round, but fascinated by the desire to hear what Bronson could prove, though he had heard him recount it more than once before.

"I was passing through your woods to the mill, it was an early autumn—I think I have I have observed, gentlemen of the jury," Bronson continued, speaking as if he were giving testimony, to produce the greater effect upon his listener, "and I have been led to observe our autumns from this murder—I think I have observed that they are earlier now than formerly. As I was saying, passing through the woods of the prisoner at the bar in a hollow

about a quarter of a mile behind his house, I saw him, the prisoner with one of his slaves, named Jessee ; I knew him well, a weakly, gentle creature."

" He was not weakly or gentle neither, by G—!" ejaculated Elwood.

" Hear my testimony," continued Bronson, taking advantage of the other's emotion, and emphasizing what he said with his first right-hand finger in his left hand, while Elwood seated himself on a log for a moment, and jumped up again. " Hear my testimony, in my opinion, and I knew him well, gentlemen of the jury—I am speaking as if I were under oath—a weakly, gentle creature, loading his cart with fire-wood. He, the prisoner, ordered Jessee, poor fellow, to lift an immense log in the cart—it was an ox-cart, gentlemen, and the log was so large that it would take three of you to lift it;" here Elwood looked up as if he were making a mute appeal from the falsehood. " Yes, gentlemen, I feel satisfied it would take three of you to lift it—Jessee could scarcely move it—his master, the prisoner, leaped from the cart, and commenced whipping him most unmercifully with the horse-whip."

" I never struck him but one blow," exclaimed Elwood, and you said, yourself, at the very time I gave the mortgage, that you believed it was done in sudden passion without any design to kill."

" First impressions are almost always roving," continued Bronson, coolly ; " my testimony, as I now remember the shocking event, will make out a case of murder against you in the first degree—a wilful, deliberate and most cruel murder on a harmless and unoffending slave. After, gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner had beaten him as I state, he ordered him again to lift the log : he couldn't move it—again he was beaten."

" Why didn't they hear him at the house," cried out Elwood in a frenzy.

" His master telling him all the while he was striking him," continued Bronson, " that if he dared to utter one word, he would kill him on the spot. When, gentlemen of the jury, the prisoner at the bar grew wearied with beating Jessee, he ordered him again to lift the log. How the poor slave exerted himself—but in vain. ' I'll kill you then,' cried out Elwood, ' you're not worth your salt ;' and so saying, he struck him to the earth with a billet of wood, and beat him till he was stone-dead. I could see all this through the trees, as I was advancing towards the prisoner, while he was so determined in his purpose that he never even looked round, as I discovered. After the prisoner was satisfied that his unfortunate and unoffending slave was dead, he dragged him by the feet to a hole a short distance off, formed by the roots of a tree which had been blown down by a whirlwind, and covering the body carefully with leaves and sticks, he drove his cart home."

" I never hit him but one blow in the world," exclaimed Elwood, wiping the cold drops from his forehead, " and that was in a passion, with a stone. You, yourself, helped me to cover him up, for you came up at the moment—and God knows that I have suffered enough in mind for it, and how much did I pay you then, and since, to say nothing about it : it has kept me a poor man."

" I have a memory most distinct for some things ; some things I cannot remember. What will be the further testimony in this case, corroborative of mine ? That some boys—this accounts from not opposing persons gunning on your place—that some boys, in hunting in your woods, discovered the skeleton of Jessee. A coroner's inquest was held over it—it was pronounced by Dr McVittee to be the remains of an African ; such was the verdict of the jury of inquest, also that the skull was fractured. They concluded by giving it as their opinion, that the bones were the remains of an African, who had been murdered by some person or persons unknown."

Elwood sighed heavily.

" Furthermore," continued Bronson ; " another point which you never thought of, sir, and in which you overlooked yourself. You advertised Jessee as a runaway."

" 'Twas by your advice," said Elwood.

" Such will not be my testimony—you advertised Jessee as a runaway, and you described the clothes he had on at the time. The buttons were peculiar, you stated, of his jacket ; they were taken from an old regimental coat of the Revolution, and had an eagle on them. Among the bones of Jessee, in corroboration, it will be shown that buttons were found, and on their being brightened, they turned out to be continental buttons—ha ! you forget these little

things in all such cases fix the facts in the jury's mind, and fasten upon the prisoner the verdict of—Guilty."

"I will see her—you shall have her if I can content her!" exclaimed Elwood in agony, utterly appalled at the array of facts and falsehoods which Bronson was so able, and expressed himself so determined, to bring against him.

"Then we are friends," said Bronson, taking his hand, "as we have ever been, with but this little interruption, which arose on your part. I will not call on her this morning. Go, forthwith—you are in the right peace of mind to extort the definite promise—let the marriage take place to-morrow at farthest. I'll see her this afternoon. Now—now's the time." So speaking, and leaving Elwood transfixed to the spot, Bronson drew his hat over his brow, and taking a pathway through the woods hastened to the village.

The facts of the killing of Jesse Lee were simply these: Elwood was a man of uncontrollable passions. He was in the woods with his ox-cart, accompanied by Jesse Lee, whom he ordered to lift a certain log into the cart. Jesse Lee, who was a stubborn, self-willed negro, did not choose to exert the strength which he was capable of to lift, at which his master damned him. Jesse Lee answered him back impudently, and without a moment's reflection he lifted a stone and felled him to the earth a corpse. Bronson was passing through the woods gunning—it was at a day before interest had taught him the policy of joining the church; he was a needy adventurer, and he availed himself without scruple of Elwood's fears. For the sum of a thousand dollars he promised to say nothing of the matter, and assisted Elwood in hiding the body. It was afterwards discovered, as he has asserted. By his guilty knowledge he held a control over Elwood, which grew at last to be absolute.

He had obtained large sums of money from him at different times, and had got him to mortgage his property for a small sum to a third person, once when he had not ready cash, which mortgage Bronson had paid, thereby obtaining an assignment of it to himself. Elwood never had had the courage to offer to foreclose it. The thought that there was a possibility of allying himself, through his niece, to the Fitzhursts, had never entered his mind, and on its being alluded to by Bronson, who had strong suspicions to that effect, he summoned up the short-lived resistance which we have recorded.

Elwood repaired instantly to his house, and to the chamber of Sarah. Utterly unnerved by the threats of Bronson, he revealed to her the facts of the case, and the perjury which Bronson was determined to commit, to make him a victim, if she would not consent to be his wife. Throwing himself on his knees before her, he implored her to save him by marrying Bronson on the morrow.

Horrified at the disclosure, and at the fiendish guilt of the man who was willing to commit perjury for revenge, and consign her relatives to the gibbet, unless she would wed him, she could only say "I will," when she fell from her chair as lifeless as the body of Jesse Lee under the deadly blow of her suppliant.

CHAPTER XVII.

We must now transport our readers to New York. On the steps of the Astor house, of a bright morning, Pinckney was seen looking upon the park. Already more than one fair cynosure of that brilliant city had dwelt with an admiring eye upon the young southerner, whose graceful form and handsome countenance attracted the notice of all who chanced to glance at him; and there were few, particularly of the gentle sex, who passed by unobservant of his gallant bearing.

Taking the arm of his friend, Matemon, from Charleston, he said:

"Let's go to the post-office."

"With pleasure," replied Matemon. "Pinckney, you're a lucky fellow; your cotton, which you thought was going off at so great a sacrifice, has sold at the highest profit; your coffers are overflowing, and you are about to wed one who will not only add to your abundance, but whose mind, beauty, and heart are worthy of all praise."

"Yes," replied Pinckney, "I do believe in the last report; at least I have secured a prize that is beyond the caprices of fortune."

"You're a lucky fellow, indeed!" exclaimed Matemon. "I envy you."

Arrived at the post-office, Pinckney received Fanny's package, with a letter from Langdale, which last he put hastily in his pocket, and, stepping aside from his friend, with a lover's impatience he opened what he thought the love-freighted missive with a heart all joy.

He could not at first believe the evidences of his senses, as he perused Fanny's laconic note. Twice and thrice he read it ere the full conviction impressed itself upon his startled senses.

Nerving himself with self-possession, Pinckney took the arm of Matemon, who, as they entered their steeds, said:

"What news from Holly? That must have been a love-letter, Pinckney?"

"Why do you think so?"

"Because you stepped aside to read it. The lover is like the miser—he counts and recounts his treasure privately."

"Ah! you are mistaken; this time it was no love-letter. Matemon, I have some letters to write—I cannot make those calls with you as I promised. Apologise for me, will you?"

"You will disappoint those ladies, Pinckney. You had better go," rejoined Matemon.

"Thank you, no. I have a letter which must be answered by return of post. I'll see you at dinner." So speaking, the friend departed. With a curling lip and a firm step, which concealed a whirlwind of emotions, in which at the moment wounded pride predominated, the proud southerner proceeded to his apartment. Arrived there, he ordered his servant to deny him, no matter who called, and strode the room for an hour without knowing that a minute had elapsed. Deep, dark, and misanthropical were his feelings—over which, like a sunburst that flashes and vanishes, better thoughts came to be crushed in the moment of their birth.

"No!" he exclaimed as such an emotion crossed him. "No! there can be no mistake in the origin of this communication. It is as mercenary as Maximus itself—as mercenary as hell. This bright dreamer of abiding affection; this fair creature of eighteen; this lady dappled in fortune's favours; realization of romantic love—she who would have clung to me, as she avowed, though poverty and famine clung to her, has thought better of it. My fortune's gone, she thinks, and she goes too. By heaven, I would not have believed it but for this conclusive testimony, though a cloud of angels had borne evidence to the fact. Fool, fool! thrice fooled! O! what a dream of happiness has melted from my anticipation. This delicate flower had the serpent in it—not taken to my bosom yet, though—not taken to my bosom—yet for better and for worse. Well, though they think—they must have done it—it could not have been of her own heart;—but what is the heart worth that so yields—though they think I have lost my self, they shall find that I have not lost my pride."

Again Pinckney perused Fanny's note, and seating himself at the table, he hastily wrote the following reply—

"Mr Pinckney's compliments to Miss Fitzhurst, with the acknowledgement of the return of 'the presents and letters she had received from Mr Pinckney.' Mr P. returns Miss Fitzhurst's, and asks no acknowledgment of their reception. While Mr Pinckney congratulates himself that his supposed loss of fortune has shown him the mercenary motives of those whom he supposed above all such influences, and with whom he was on the eve of forming so close an alliance, he regrets poignantly that the facts will go far to destroy his belief in any human being's disinterestedness. In justice to himself, Mr Pinckney must say that such motives as he has alluded to were as alien to his heart as he supposed them alien to Miss Fitzhurst's. Mr Pinckney re-echoes Miss Fitzhurst's remark, that should Mr P. and Miss Fitzhurst ever meet it must be on the footing of entire strangers. Mr P.'s only regret is, that their original dissimilarity of character had not kept them strangers."

Fanny herself did not make up her package half so quick as Pinckney, or order her servant to take it to the post-office with half the determination with which he dispatched his on a similar errand.

Again he strode his room, with something almost of fierceness in his eye, like one who has retaliated upon an enemy. Strange this balked love is! and how in the human heart the flower it most nurtured will, under some overwhelming influence, seemingly turn to the deadly Upas.

Then he reflected how he should revenge himself further, and almost made up his mind that he would instantly return to ———, and offer himself to Miss Atherton. Such revenge is often taken—if that can be called revenge, which is the certain proof that the unwedded is the beloved one.

This reflection brought to mind Langdale's attentions to Miss Atherton, and it occurred to him to peruse the letter which he had received from his friend. He did so, and was somewhat surprised at its contents, which ran thus:—

“ **MY DEAR PINCKNEY**,—I mean to make this bulletin short: the agony is over with me; my resolutions have suffered a complete Waterloo defeat. I am caught at last. I have determined to become Benedict the married man. Like him, I mean to laugh at all those who laugh at me. Congratulate me, my friend.—Miss Atherton has consented to draw closer, and make indissoluble the bonds of relationship already existing between us.

“ Your letter of the day before yesterday informed me that you would be here next Monday; on the following Wednesday, I propose to lead my fair cousin to the altar, and I expect you to do me the honour of officiating as my groomsman. When we bachelors are caught, we speed the hours to make up for lost time. As you see, I shall be married before you, and I won't tell you what a happy man I am; for fear that your remembrances of our former conversations might make you smile; yet I might do so, for we then could both smile with and at each other.

“ My fair cousin sends her warmest regards. The mistress of your heart I have not seen for some days; I heard yesterday that she was somewhat indisposed. You hear, doubtless, of each minute as she counts it. But I tell you this, that love and friendship may both combine their power to hasten your speed to our city, and to the greetings of your friend,

“ **RICHARD LANGDALE.**”

“ Fanny indisposed,” said Pinckney, with a return of tenderness; “ what can be the matter with her? Could her friends have forced her to make that communication to me?” No! let me dismiss her from my mind; but I will go to this bridal; should she be there she shall see —aye, and feel—how entirely as strangers we meet. The talk it will make! I thought Langdale was coming to this. I wonder if she loves him; not a whit, I fear. She's a splendid creature. I should say that I am victimized all round the compass—but I'll to the bridal—as groomsman. When shall I be a groom? Never—by God, I hope never!”

Pinckney rung for his servant, and desired him to learn when the conveyance departed for Langdale's city; and at the very moment he made his last remark of never being a groom, if his heart had spoken as loudly as his lips, it would have developed the fact that he wanted a good excuse to be near Fanny, if only to show her, he said to himself, feeling self-detected by the emotion, how entirely as a stranger I shall act towards her.

Here his servant entered, and announced the fact that in half an hour the steamboat would start. Pinckney ordered him immediately to get his baggage in readiness, and to proceed with it to the boat—but he scarcely had issued the order ere he countermanded it.

“ She'll be certain I want an explanation,” he said to himself, “ if I go. What if she does, she'll soon be mistaken; she'll find that I am to be Langdale's groomsman. I go—I go. Indisposed—she may not be in the city at all. What can trouble? I don't care what troubles her; I'll go.”

And with this misanthropical reflection he hurried his servant off with his baggage, wrote a hasty note to Matemou, requesting him to follow, and leaping into a hack desired the driver to hurry, for fear he might be left behind.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AND the sacrifice—Sarah Grattan had consented to that self-sacrifice to which the immolation of the Hindoo woman on the funeral pile of her dead lord is as an hour's suffering to a life-long torture. She lived to save her uncle; but for that she would have died ere she could have consented to be the wife of Bronson. Oh! what a life of unmitigated wretchedness such a woman leads linked to such a man! Hourly she blushes at his manner, appearance, and character, when in society. Hourly, when alone with him, how she shrinks from that wanton disregard to her feelings, that downright brutality, which even his moments of fondness exhibit; and if she becomes a mother, what must her emotions be, bound as she is by the strong tie of holy nature to her child, to see reflected in his features and conduct the character of such a father! Yet, alas! how many women do we see daily in society who are such sufferers! victims to parental authority at the shrine of wealth!—martyrs who, with an upheld hope, endure to the last, and tell not even unto a mother what they endure! The pallid cheek, the wan temple, the drooping eye, speak the fact for them to an observer, while ninety-nine out of a hundred remark;—“Tis a pity Mrs So-and-so has such delicate health. What a fine house she has, everything that heart can wish.” At that very time, too, to add to and heighten the gloom of her loveless home, maybe with a Christian's faith she is praying for strength to overcome some blighted affection from which she was torn to be made a living sacrifice.

Sarah's uncle had scarcely left her apartment, after extorting her promise to marry Bronson on the morrow, when aunt Agnes entered. She was in fact met on the steps by Elwood, who had rushed down stairs to call the servants to the assistance of his niece. He jerked his hat over his eyes, told Agnes that Sarah had fainted, and implored her to hasten to her room.

It was with great difficulty that she succeeded in restoring her charge to consciousness; when she had done so, she insisted upon knowing from Sarah what had troubled her.

“My dear aunty—I am sick—sick; I would I were dead. God forgive me for saying so,” said Sarah, reverently throwing her wan eyes upwards.

“My child,” said Agnes, “it is the sorrow of the heart that ails you—I know it all. Your uncle has told you Bronson's threat, and you have promised to marry him.”

“Merciful Father, aunt Agnes!” exclaimed Sarah, starting from her pillow, “you will not betray my uncle. Maybe I can learn to like—to like—”

“Child, child!” said Agnes, interrupting her, and taking her hand, “speak not—from your kindness and affection to those who do not deserve it at your hands—speak not a falsehood. My beloved child, I would willingly lay down this aged body in the grave to serve you. How shall I do it? I was in the clump of trees by the barn—I overheard their whole conversation. Bronson is a more evil man than your uncle. I expected this result; I would have stepped forth to them, and threatened them both with the law, but I feared they might make way with you, and compel you, where you had no friends, to this marriage, which must not be.”

Here aunt Agnes recounted circumstantially to Sarah the interview between her uncle and Bronson, which, from the clump of trees near by, in which she had stopped to rest herself on a visit to Sarah, she had distinctly overheard. Sarah buried her head in her pillow, and wept when aunt Agnes told what passed between them with regard to herself and Sidney.

“Tell me, child,” said aunt Agnes, when she had concluded her narrative—“I speak frankly—is there any affection existing between Sidney Fitzhurst and yourself?”

“Not that I know of,” faltered Sarah.

“Not that you know of,” said aunt Agnes, reproachfully; “do you not know that you love him, child?”

“Aunt Agnes, aunt Agnes! what avails either the question or the answer?—what avails it?”

“Child, does he not love you? Do you not know it?”

"Know it—no, no ! I thought he liked me once, but—but—"

"But what ? Speak to me, child ; I feel for you as much as the mother that bare you could feel, were she by your side."

"He is to marry Miss Moreland."

"And must it be," said Agnes, half in soliloquy, "even my fate to see those who were born for each other separated, and by such cruel circumstances ?—Where is Sidney, child ?"

"He went on a visit with Miss Moreland to see her friends—maybe to Philadelphia—previous, I suppose, to their marriage."

"I am surprised at this—surprised !" exclaimed aunt Agnes ; "I had other thoughts ; but, child, you must not be made a sacrifice to this Bronson."

"Dear aunt Agnes, say no more about it. I would not be made a sacrifice, but to save my uncle—I have none to care for me but you ; those whom I thought cared for me are indifferent to me ; my life must be short and miserable ; at least it is not in the power of mortal now to make it otherwise. O ! my dear aunt Agnes, pray for me, ask the great God of his mercy to give me strength to bear my bitter destiny."

"Child, the ways of God are just, though inscrutable to us. My poor, poor Sarah," she continued, parting the hair from the pale brow of the sufferer, "when I have held you in these arms a little infant, how many scenes of happiness have I painted for you ; how full of sunshine I made your pathway of life, and does it end in this ?—it must not be ; my faith is, that the righteous even here shall escape the snare of the sinner ; but, child, I must leave you—I will be back to-night."

"Aunt Agnes," said Sarah, with firmness, "do nothing in your love for me to injure my uncle. I have nothing to live for ; a few weeks ago I thought the world all brightness before me—but now I have nothing to live for. My frail frame cannot hold out this struggle long—let me save my uncle and die. I am most miserable. The pang here," said she, putting her hand on her heart, "my marriage with Mr Bronson can neither increase nor cure. —Maybe I shall feel some relief in marrying him, from the conviction that I have saved my uncle."

Aunt Agnes gazed on her charge with melancholy earnestness, and repeating that she would be back by night, she left the chamber and the house.

With a step, to which the energy of her purpose gave an elasticity and firmness beyond her years, aunt Agnes hastened to Springdale, and to the store of Bronson. She found that individual in, behind his counter, dealing flattery on a pumpkin customer by wholesale, for the purpose of getting a retail profit of a sixpence out of him in the sale of a bit of ribbon for his sweetheart. Bronson knew that his customer was to be married, and his own approaching nuptials made him eloquent in praise of the articles which were intended for the bride.

Bronson's clerk was not in, and aunt Agnes took a seat, and observed Bronson with a searching eye until the customer was served and had departed ; she then, in reply to his question of what she would have, asked—

"Mr Bronson, are you to marry Sarah ?"

"Sarah !" re-echoed Bronson, rubbing his hands, and taking the old woman's visit for one of congratulation, with the intention of coaxing a present out of him, he continued : "I think, Mistress Agnes, that you might have said—it would have been more respectful—Miss Grattan. Yes, it's my intention to make her Mrs Bronson. These are horrible times—not times for a man to get married—profits all swamped in losses ; but her uncle insisted upon it—and, I suppose—ha ! ha ! you were young once, Mistress Agnes—you understand these matters. I suppose the truth was she prompted him."

"She prompted him !" said Agnes, scarcely able to control her indignation, "but what, Mr Bronson, if she did not prompt him ?"

"That, Mistress Agnes, I shall not readily believe. What did you come here for, old woman ?" replied Bronson, regarding her sternly.

"To appeal to you as a man, and to tell you that your marriage with Sarah would be the death of her."

"The death of her ! ladies don't die so easily, old woman. You're here—I see it—you're here from that young aristocrat, Sidney Fitzhurst—that sabbath-breaker and race-ground lounging. He, nor no power on earth or elsewhere—the Lord forgive me, I mean out of heaven—can prevent my marrying her. So, go back and tell him it won't do. Fine feathers

make fine birds, but fine birds don't always have the best nests. Ha! ha! tell him that, old woman. I have seen Elwood—he has seen his niece—she fixed upon to-morrow morning, nine o'clock. I should have set the evening, and had a brilliant party of it—but her coyness preferred private marriage.

"A private marriage!" exclaimed aunt Agnes, rising to her feet; "I'll bear it no longer—you foul disgrace to humanity, do you know that I know the whole plot between you and Elwood to sacrifice my Sarah? You think, or you pretend to think, that you can give him to the gibbet for the slaying of Jesse. I believe that I can marry you, not privately, but publicly, to the penitentiary."

"Me!" exclaimed Bronson, in great terror. "Mistress Agnes—I don't understand you, my dear madam—you jest."

"There is no jest about it, sir. I overheard the whole conversation behind the barn between you and Mr Elwood; the threats you used to make him compel Sarah Grattan to marry you. The whole of it—every word. If he is a murderer, you are the secreter of a murderer for money—extorted money. More than that; my house is by the old mill—lonely, but in that lonely place there has been transactions with counterfeitors, if I mistake not. I have come to play the game with you which you played with Mr Elwood. My silence is purchased upon the promise that you see Sarah Grattan no more."

"Take a seat, my good madam, take a seat," said Bronson, in desperate alarm.

"No; I have other duties to perform; and this one is first and peremptory. Make the promise, or I go instantaneously before a squire, and make oath to all I know."

"What do you know? what do you know?" said Bronson. "Let's walk down through the village to the common. I'll lock my door and go with you."

Unnecessary trouble, Mr Bronson; I would not trust my life there with you. Do you promise that to-morrow you will not go near Sarah Grattan, nor speak to her of marriage again? Man, I am not to be trifled with, and have other business."

"I—I—my dear madam, I will; but step a moment."

"See that you keep your promise, then," said Agnes. "I shall not stop another moment."

So speaking, aunt Agnes left Bronson to his own reflections; and before he could get round his counter to gaze after her, with the uncertainty of a guilty mind as to what his purpose was, she had disappeared behind a corner dwelling, on her way to Holly.

Fanny had but a few hours before received Pinckney's communication. She was stung to the quick to think that Pinckney attributed her dismissal of him to his imputed loss of fortune; while the conviction that she had acted too hastily, and the reproaches of her own wounded affections, were daily growing stronger from the hour she hurried off her servant to the post-office from Langdale's.

"What," said she, in this frame of mind, "what had his writing to Miss Atherton a long time ago, when he was so young, to do with his affection for me? It had nothing to do with his heart, or his character—nothing to do with the love I bear him, which I cannot—I cannot conquer. Petted, and petted all my life—to what wretchedness it has brought me. And then to think that he should attribute my conduct to his loss of fortune. He had nothing else to attribute it to—nothing else. I am degraded in his estimation—for ever degraded. What slaves this self-will makes of us. Here's father and aunt, too, asking me so many torturing questions about Howard—about Mr Pinckney—it's Howard no longer. I wish I could let him know—though we should never meet again on earth—I wish I could let him know that his loss of fortune had nothing to do with it. How meanly he must think of me; and what else can he think?"

Pompey interrupted the sad reflections of his young mistress by announcing to her that aunt Agnes had called to see her.

"Bring her up into my chamber, Pompey," said Fanny, rising from a low stool, on which she had been seated, and mechanically adjusting her hair and dress.

"Child," said aunt Agnes, entering the room, and taking Fanny's hand, "you look pale too; what has come over you girls?"

"Pale! do I?" said Fanny, starting; "I'm very well—no, I'm not very well. Aunty, I have been thinking of Jane Lovell's story, and it makes me sad."

" What should make you think of that, child?"

" I know not. We can't account for our thoughts always," replied Fanny.

" Your lover's away ; that's it, child," rejoined Agnes. " And now I'll give you a piece of advice ; avoid the first impulse of wounded feeling, which may lead you to mistrust either the affection or the conduct of your lover or your husband. It may estrange you from each other before you know it. And, dear, act always with confidence and frankness towards those, and especially towards him you love. The little deceptions—harmless coquetry, as it is called—which women sometimes practise towards their lovers, has made many a love story a sad one."

" Aunty," exclaimed Fanny, in a surprised tone, " why do you particularly give me such advice?"

" Because, child, I have observed your character, and think it necessary."

" Not the last part. I wish my dearest, dearest brother would come home," replied Fanny ; " I can sit on his knee, and tell him everything—all my troubles."

" It was he that I wished to see," said aunt Agnes ; " when will he be here?"

" We expect him every moment ; he has been detained longer than he anticipated. That puts me in mind of a letter that I should attend to—really I have neglected his requests. Aunty, you stay. O! how is Sarah?"

" Sad, child, sad ; why don't you call and see her?"

" I have been sad myself ; and I thought, as I had been in town some time, that Sarah should call and see me first. It was foolish in me, but—"

" Well, child, it was foolish, as you say—call and see her to-morrow, and I will see you both there. It is getting dark, and I must go."

" No, aunty ; stay all night."

" I cannot, my dear ; I promised Sarah to be back. To-morrow, remember, my child."

" I will. Do, aunty, send Pompey to me."

So speaking, Fanny shook hands with the old woman, and she withdrew.

Pompey made his appearance ; and, writing a hasty note to Sarah, she enclosed within it a letter, and bade Pompey mount a horse instantly, and bear it to Mr Elwood's.

CHAPTER XIX.

AUNT Agnes stopped more than half an hour below stairs after she left Fanny, talking with Peggy Gammon, who, with her cousin Bobby, had been since the death of their grandmother inmates of Holly.

When she left Peggy the night had set in, which was nothing to her who had traversed the spot and neighbourhood so often, and furthermore it was a bright evening. With her mind absorbed in interest for Sarah she took her way to Elwood's. She had not advanced more than a quarter of a mile when she was overtaken by Bobby, who, as fast as his lameness would admit, came hastening breathless to his side.

" Good night, aunt Agnes," said Bobby, as he limped up to her. " Cousin Peggy sent me after you to be company home for you."

" Bobby, that was not necessary ; I have walked these woods at all times. My boy, go back again ; with your lameness it must fatigue you."

" Indeed it don't," said Bobby quickly. " Aunty, what did you tell me that for ? I have been gunning through the woods all the afternoon, and I don't feel tired at all."

" Bobby, I spoke in good feeling towards you, my boy. I'm always fond of company. Did you get much game?"

" Yes, aunty, considerable—eight quails and two rabbits, and only missed two shots—yes, an' I saw a big bird—he, he !—that I like to ha' shot one day—and he don't like me nor cousin Peggy neither."

" Who's that, Robert? no mischief, I hope."

" No, aunty ; it was only Mr. Bronson, who told granny once about my laughing to meeting. I saw him skulking round Mr Elwood's just about dark. He's brooding over some deviltry, I'll bet."

" Skulking about Mr Elwood's! Did you speak to him?"

" O yes! we spoke together, an' he soft-soaped me considerable; an' advised me to go home 'cause the night dews—he, he, he!—might harm me."

" What else did he say?"

" I overheard him tell Tom, who was just going home from wood-chopping, to tell his master that he wanted to see him there. I stopped behind a tree to fix my gun, an' he thought I had gone ahead."

" I wonder," said aunt Agnes, " when Sidney Fitzhurst will be home."

" Home! he's just come as I left there—I just had time to shake hands with him, and hurry after you, aunty."

" Then, child!" exclaimed Agnes, " we will turn back."

She accordingly returned, speaking not a word to Bobby except an occasional yes or no, in answer to him, which were more than once misplaced.

Without any ceremony aunt Agnes entered the room where Sidney sat with his sister on his knee, and his father and aunt beside him, welcoming him home.

" Mr Sidney!" exclaimed Agnes, with deep emotion, " do you feel an interest in Sarah Grattan?"

Startled by her manner, Sidney looked earnestly at her, and replied:

" Yes, aunt Agnes—the deepest interest."

" Then fly and save her! There is a plot between Elwood, her uncle, and Bronson, to compel her to marry Bronson."

" Impossible!" exclaimed Sidney gently, but quickly removing Fanny from his knee, and springing to his feet.

" Far, far from impossible," exclaimed Agnes. " Sarah thinks you feel no interest in her, and to save her uncle from the consequences of the disclosures which Bronson can make, and from perjuries which he will dare, she has been forced to consent to marry Bronson. Young man, if you love her, fly now to Elwood's and save her."

" Love her!" screamed Miss Rachellina; " think of our family."

" Son!" ejaculated Mr Fitzhurst, but it was of no avail. Sidney sprang to the door, and in a minute more was speeding to Elwood's as fast as his steed could bear him.

Bobby's remark was true. Bronson was indeed after some "deviltry." When Agnes left his store he awaited most impatiently the return of his clerk, to whom he stated that business would probably prevent his returning that day, and if any one inquired for him, to say that he had gone to the city. He accordingly left his store, and went directly to Elwood's, but, instead of entering the house, he lurked about in the confines of the wood until he saw Tom, whom he ordered, as Bobby stated, to tell his master that he wanted to see him.

It was some time before Elwood joined Bronson; his guilty fears, after an internal resistance, at last predominated, and he sought him in the woods.

" Ah, my friend!" said Bronson, with great affected cordiality, advancing to meet Elwood. " I sent for you on this matter of which we discoursed this morning, to have a little private talk with you. Dispatch is the word—your niece has consented, hey?"

" Yes," replied Elwood, " to-morrow."

" I knew she would. You have a great influence over her, and you ought to have—but dispatch is the word. Now, while she's just thinking of it—now, we'll send Tom for Squire Norris, and have the matter ended at once. I've business that will take me away to-morrow, and I wish to make all square and right before I go."

Elwood stammered out something about his niece not being well, but Bronson replied she might be worse to-morrow, and that he had made up his mind to marry her that night. Elwood then reluctantly led the way to the house. Bronson stopped suddenly, and asked:

" Is that old woman, Agnes, there?"

" No," said Elwood.

" Ay, that's right—she is an old hag, and must be kept away; we must see to that."

On arriving at the house Elwood went to Sarah's chamber, and communicated to her his interview with Bronson, and implored her to yield to his wishes.

Stupified, Sarah could say nothing. Taking the silence for the consent, Elwood told her that he would send for the squire, who could perform, according to law, the ceremony as well.

as a clergyman. He then withdrew, and dispatched Tom to the village for the magistrate, after which he joined Bronson, who acted the amiable with all his might, but whose restless impatience would not let him sit still a moment.

When her uncle had left her, Sarah sat motionless, and as if unconscious of her own existence. On her maid's entering with Fanny's letter, which Pompey had brought, she started up, and glared at her wildly, and then laughed hysterically as she received it.

Sarah tore open the note: Fanny asked her to come and see her, and stated that the enclosed she had received from her brother the day before, with the request that it should be handed to Sarah immediately. Fanny further said, that by some neglect or other in the post-office, the letter in which that was enclosed had been detained some time, and that it was only by accident she got it by her aunt's seeing it among the list of advertised letters.

A flash of unutterable joy broke over Sarah's features as she opened and glanced over Sidney's letter. It was a declaration of the most ardent and devoted attachment, expressed with all the fervor of his noble and manly heart. He said that, contrasting her with the fashionable worldlings around him, he felt impelled to write to her, and say what she had no doubt seen, in his manner, when they were together, that he loved her with his whole soul. He trusted she was not entirely indifferent to him; and he begged her, if she was not, to write to him instantly and cure the disquietude of mind which he could not but feel in the loss of her society. He said she was the only woman he had ever loved, and all he asked was to devote his life to her.

Wildly Sarah pressed the letter to her lips, while tears of love and joy and pride fell thick and fast upon it. She read it again and again; and, when night closed around her, she placed it in her bosom, and forgot all else but that it was there, and that he who wrote it was still closer.

These emotions, which so few are capable of feeling in their intensity, were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who said that her uncle wished her to come down stairs. Without hesitating a moment Sarah complied.

As she entered the room where her uncle and Bronson sat together, timidity, which was her greatest characteristic, seemed entirely to have left her. There was a dignity in her manner, and a something in her eye, that startled both of them.

Bronson rose with the evident intention of offering her his hand, but Sarah folded her arms, and, looking towards Elwood, said:

"Well, uncle?"

"Niece," said Elwood, without the capability of lifting his eye from the carpet, "I have sent for you that we might all speak together of your marriage with our friend here."

"That, uncle, can never be!"

"Never be!" ejaculated Elwood, glancing at Bronson, who eyed him like a beast of prey.

"Never be, uncle! When no one's happiness but my own, as I thought, was to be involved in this connexion, I yielded for your sake, but with the conviction that I could not long survive it. I was willing to die to save you from the cupidity of this man. I will give him whatever title I may have to any property to be silent, but my hand—never."

"I see it!" ejaculated Bronson, almost choked with rage; "that Pompey has brought some message from that fellow Fitzhurst."

"Is that true, niece?"

"Uncle, you have a right to an answer; it is true."

"I knew it, by God!" shouted Bronson in the agony of his rage, forgetful of his violation of the commandment.

"Has he made love to you, Sarah?" A blush of the deepest crimson mantled for a moment the pale cheek and brow of Sarah Grattan ere she replied:

"He has, uncle. I knew not his regard for me until this hour, though I have loved him long. Not to save any one from the consequences of their rash impulses have I a right to do such irrevocable violence to his confidence and affection as marry this man—for, O God!" exclaimed Sarah, with an emotion which she could not control, "if he knew but half my love, no earthly consideration could induce him so to crush me in heart and hope for ever and for ever."

"I know it all—all—Sarah!" exclaimed Sidney Fitzhurst, springing into the room, and

holding her to his heart. Sarah uttered a faint cry of joy, and fell lifeless in her lover's arms. Sidney bore his gentle burden to the sofa, and, while he was doing all he could to reinstate her, Bronson touched Elwood on the shoulder, and they stole out of the house together.

C H A P T E R X X.

GORDON'S wife, Catharine, was, shortly after her visit to Miss Atherton, instituted as her maid. Miss Atherton had formed an attachment for her, which arose in some measure from some slight similarity of character which had once existed between them. Now it was no longer apparent, for Catharine's love for Gordon and long consequent suffering had entirely erased the spirit of coquetry and love of dominion which had once possessed her.

Happy in abundant spirits, and in her situation near one she loved and respected, Catharine was wont to assist at her mistress's toilet, when she delighted to expatiate upon the number of the lady's triumphs to a not unpleased ear. While Miss Atherton was not averse to the recital of her own conquests, it pleased her to draw forth her maid upon her own, and in this way she learned the depth of Catharine's affection for Gordon.

After Gordon married Catharine she left the service of Miss Atherton, and the narrative which she gave her of her leaving Europe and finding Gordon in the United States, is precisely as it occurred. Miss Atherton had not been forgetful of her promise to Catharine. She got Langdale to employ Mr Mason in his case—that gentleman, however, remarking, in the spirit of candour, that he did not believe that any professional service whatever would be of any avail in rescuing him from what he could not but say would be merited punishment.

Miss Atherton told Catharine what Mason said; but it only increased her sadness of spirits, and she begged her mistress to suffer her to see Gordon. To this Miss Atherton reluctantly consented, and Catharine took a seat in a stage which went to Springdale every other day, promising to return with it.

Catharine's feelings were so absorbed in her interest for Gordon that she noticed nothing on her way, except the lagging paces of the horses up the rough unpaved hills. She bore a letter from Mr Mason to the sheriff, requesting him to admit her to the cell of Gordon. She found an immense concourse of people in Springdale who had convened for the purpose of holding a political meeting. With great difficulty in the afternoon she gained the ear of the sheriff, who had given orders, on learning that Bronson had visited Gordon, to admit no one to him without his written permit. Bearing the mandate of the executive officer of the law, she repaired to the prison door whence she had been roughly driven by Pike, and on showing him the sheriff's order, was most graciously admitted.

Pike's domestic cares restrained his garrulity; and, opening the cell of Gordon just sufficiently for Catharine to enter, without saying a word he turned the keys on her, and hastened to the side of his wife.

Gordon lay upon his mattress on his prison floor in a state of partial intoxication. Through the window where Bobby had conversed with Pompey, as our readers may remember when his grandmother's funeral went by, an accomplice, Tom Fenton, who had secreted himself in the woods, and who had been met by Bronson on his visit to Elwood, and informed of Gordon's situation, had conveyed to him brandy, and tools wherewith to effect his escape. Fenton was induced to do this at great risk to himself, from the fear that Gordon would inform upon them; and from the fact that he was without any of their booty himself, and was entirely destitute, and with the hope that through Gordon he might be supplied. Bronson had given him a few dollars, pretending it was a charitable relief, though they both understood each other, and that the money was in aid of Gordon's escape.

Gordon's stillness since he had obtained the liquor had induced Pike to believe that he had become more reconciled to his situation, which made the gaoler less wary. Instead, however, of instantly setting about preparing the means of escaping, Gordon, as soon as the brandy was given him, drank deeply, and had been partially intoxicated ever since.

As Gordon lay in drunken sensuality in a dark corner of his cell, his wife could not see him, owing to the contrast of the little light within to the glare without which she had just left. Several times she ejaculated, "John! dear John!" before she spoke to him.

He had observed her, however, from the first; and had his eye fixed on her in sudden anger.

"Come at last, have you?" he growled out, raising himself upon his arm, and frowning on her with a ferocious stare.

"John, I came as soon as I could. How are you, John—dear John, aint you well?"

"Well; by God! Do you expect a man to be well here? have you got any money?"

"Yes, John; here's five dollars."

"Is it counterfeit?"

"No, John, no."

"Then give it to me. I'll have no counterfeits; you've ruined me by counterfeits. That's the way Boss got me."

"John, Mr Mason, the lawyer, will attend to your case. I've seen him and talked to him about you."

"Ha! will he?—that's right; ask him to come and see me."

"I thank, John," she continued, "that I can interest Mr Pinckney for you too."

"Blast him!" exclaimed Gordon; "come closer—let me whisper to you."

Catharine submissively took a seat by Gordon on the edge of his mattress.

"He's the chap, if you must know it, who had my twin brother punished for robbing him—my twin brother—he just made him deliver in the streets one night—never touched a hair o' his head—but, no matter, I'll do for him yet if I can get out of this scrape."

"Yes, John; and was that the reason," replied Catharine, "that you made me take his likeness from Miss Clara?"

"No; I got that for that Italian woman who loved him; she paid me well for it, but what's it to you? What about the locket, hey?"

"Nothing, John, nothing; I thought I'd ask you. I think Miss Clara Atherton would do something for you too, John."

"Would she—ah! do you think she would?" exclaimed the prisoner, eagerly catching at the thought. "Tell me—I know it, she's privately married to Mr Ashley, so she ran off to this country; she don't want it known, hey?"

"Never, John; never!" exclaimed Catharine.

"I heard so," rejoined Gordon; "I called to see her to sell a horse to her, and meant to talk round, but she seemed not to know what to make of me, and I left her. Think she will help me? There was something wrong there."

"Mr Ashley fought with another gentleman on her account, and was killed; that's all, John; John—I wish, O! I do wish—that you could get out of this. She says—"

"You've seen her!" said Gordon, in a low, compressed tone.

"I have, John."

"What did she say?" he replied, in a manner meant to be insinuating.

"Why, John—O God! but I'll tell the truth—that Mr Mason says there's not much chance for you, John—but there is, there is; I'll see them all, and beg for you—court, jury, all."

"No chance! where do you live? you're dressed well; see how I look. Where do you live?"

"I live with Miss Clara, John," replied his wife, in a deprecating tone, alarmed at the angry earnestness with which he asked his questions.

"Live with her, and she my enemy; and I here!" he exclaimed, grasping her wrist with manacled hands, and maddened with drunkenness and rage.

"John," she said imploringly, in a low voice, "do me no wrong here, it will only injure you. John—they'll know it, it will make your case worse."

"Worse! you have betrayed me; you told your Miss Clara about the locket."

"John, but it was for your sake."

"Ha! for my sake, my sake!" he muttered, pressing her to the floor with his hand upon her throat.

"John, when—O God! don't kill me, John. I—I! help—I—for the love of mercy."

As Catharine ejaculated her mortal terror, Gordon pressed her throat the tighter; the fear that she would be overheard giving vigour to his revenge.

She gathered her whole strength, and succeeded in disengaging his hand from her throat.

"John, this is not hanging matter, this counterfeiting; you may escape if you don't murder me, John."

As she spoke she half arose, and got her body from the bed. He seized her this instant by the arm, and jerked her down with such violence as to strike her head with stunning force upon the floor. Gnashing his teeth with demoniac hate, and with a momentary supernatural strength, arising from his fury and the brandy he had swallowed, he twisted the iron-bar which joined together the manacles on his wrists round her throat, and palsied by the effort fell prostrate by her side.

The scene of that horrible night, when, in his excited fancy, he sold himself to the evil one, now revived like a fearful reality in the brain of Gordon, and he heard Ross laugh, and the tempter claim him.

In accents almost inarticulate from intoxication and guilt, he called on his wife again and again to look at him and smile; and he tried to loosen the bar from her throat, and he begged her to pray for him; and he put his ear to her lips, and heard no voice, and felt no breath. Cursing her again, he twisted the bar closer, and sank senseless on her bosom; that bosom which had always cherished him, and where he lay her murderer.

CHAPTER XXL

The cry ran through the streets of Springdale just as the sun was setting—so different a setting sun to the two—that Gordon had murdered his unoffending and confiding wife.

The crowd forgot their excited talk of politics, and rushed in wild horror to the gaol. The sea of heads around moved like the waves when the storm strikes them.

"Lynch him! Lynch him!" was the shout from a thousand turbulent voices.

The cry for summary justice reached the appalled prisoner in his cell. Pike, not without calling in assistance, had succeeded in freeing the throat of the woman from the twisted bar of the manacles which bound it closer than a halter; she was stone dead, for it was more than an hour after Pike locked her in that fatal apartment ere he returned. A coroner's inquest had been instantly summoned, and the verdict was:—Wilful murder against Gordon.

Gordon begged Pike, who stood beside him as the crowd gathered, swarmed, and shouted without, to let him see the body of his wife.

"She's not dead!" he exclaimed; "they can't prove it on me; let me see her."

"She's as certainly dead as you are certain to be damned," said Pike, "or hanged; an' that you'll be without judge or jury."

"They dare not; they dare not!" said Gordon, covering his head in his bed-clothes, to shut from his senses the loud cry of "Lynch him!" which now, in accumulated wildness and strengthening purpose, rung forth on the ear of night, and over the hitherto peaceful village, from the assembled multitude, who had gathered in dark masses round the gaol."

"They're breaking in upon us!" exclaimed Pike, frightened at the thundering at the gaol doors which now took place, and the stern demand to give up the murderer.

Door after door, with steady determination, was crushed in by the mob. The sheriff had endeavoured to curb them; but had been hustled off by them with threats against his life.

"I couldn't get out," said Gordon, lifting his head from the mattress; "how can they get in?"

"They've got in!" shouted Pike, hastily leaving the prisoner alone. "I must look after my family—place or no place." Gordon quailed beneath the frowning men who had climbed up to his prison window, and were scowling at and cursing him.

He called on Pike not to leave him, but in vain. The crowd, with lighted candles and torches flashing to and fro over their heads and against the prison walls, had entered the passage, where they met Pike, and demanded him to show them the room of the murderer.

He pointed it out, and, unable to break through them, crouched in the recess of one of the cell doors. They pressed past him with the fierce fury of so many fiends, and entered the cell of the murderer. Gordon begged them, for mercy's sake, to spare him.

"You did not spare her!" cried several of them, seizing him.

"Ha, Hall! I know you!" cried Gordon to the tavern-keeper, at whose house Ross had

arrested him, and who was trying to win a good name by lynching his former comrade ; " I know you—you're a——"

" No murderer !" shouted Hall, leaping upon him. Gordon struggled with terrific energy ; but, manacled as he was, he was soon overpowered, and dragged like a beast into the street.

Here Gordon made a stern struggle ; and, notwithstanding his fetters, broke loose from the mob. He sprang at Hall, and with one blow felled him to the earth ; the iron on his wrist fracturing the skull of his captor. The crowd stood back, frightened by his desperation. He here saw Robert Gammon, and putting his feet together, so as to leap with his prison incumbrances, he made at the boy, who stood looking at him in pity—not anger. Bobby stepped aside, and avoided the blow aimed at him. At this, Gordon turned on Hall, and again preparing himself for a leap, he jumped with all his might on his prostrate form. At this moment a large stone, thrown by one of the by-standers, felled Gordon to the earth ; but he recovered himself.

The inflictors of summary justice, at this, gathered close to him ; impelled rather by the crowd around them than by their own desires, which, however bloodthirsty, were rendered for the moment powerless by the desperation of their prey. They seemed like so many hounds, shrinking from the fury of a stricken tiger. Another missile, hurled at Gordon, laid him speechless before them. They then seized him. Some cried out :

" Let's hang him on the hustings !"

" No," exclaimed one of the candidates who had made the last speech there, " that would degrade the freedom of elections ;" and he was about making an oration over Gordon, like that of Marc Antony over Cæsar, though certainly not with his intentions, when Gordon raised himself on his hands and knees, and the speaker retreated in affright.

" Let's burn him ! " cried out another, a carpenter ; " let's burn him on the common : there's plenty of shavings at my shop ! "

" Unnecessary cruelty ! " shouted a butcher ; " knock him on the head at once, and end the matter."

" Gentlemen," protested Squire Norris, who thought of the fee he should obtain for committing him, rather than of his offence on the violated majesty of justice, " let the law take its course : bring him before me, and I'll commit him fully—there's no bail in these cases—and I'll commit him fully for the murder."

By this time Gordon recovered himself somewhat from the effects of the blow, and flung his hands wildly around him. Just as he lifted his hands to wipe away the dust and blood from his face, he was struck violently with a club. He sprung forward in the direction of the blow, and uttered so piercing a cry of mingled despair and rage, that the crowd recoiled from him for many feet ; while their candles and torches waved rapidly, and many behind were prostrated by the recoilers. Gordon now stepped back, unable to keep his feet from exhaustion, though still gazing round on the crowd in horror and hate, with his face bloody, and his hands raised to protect his head.

" You're doing the very act he has himself committed," cried out a humane individual, trying to press through the crowd to the protection of the murderer. He was, however, jerked violently back by the more sanguinary.

" Don't kill him at once ! " exclaimed Thomson, Pompey's old enemy, who had an amateur's love for the use of the horse-whip upon human flesh, with an old stager's practice, as each and all of his slaves, male and female, could testify by the mean exhibition of their persons, and who was perhaps desirous of seeing the different effects of the lash upon white and black skin—" Don't kill him at once ! strip him naked, and tie him with his arms round a tree, and let me operate upon him ; I'll whip quickly a full confession out of him, or he shall leave his hide behind him and climb the tree."

" Thompson, you'd better clear out ! " exclaimed Bobby to him with a kindling eye, stepping up to his side, " or you may catch what you don't like yourself."

" Gentlemen—my friends ! " shouted Thompson, " this boy, Bob Gammon, wants to stay the course of justice—let's give him a taste of the horse-whip—Oh, Lord ! let me operate—let's take him to my woods—I'll show you."

" Do you object ? " said a man, taking Bobby by the collar.

" I do," said the boy firmly, releasing his gripe.

"Do you hear that?" exclaimed Thompson, exultingly: "he ought to have—just say the word."

"Remember the woods yourself," said a voice near to him, while the rest were too intent upon their purposes to hear or heed the byplay. A friend of Bobby led him away.

"Hang the murderer upon the sign post," called out a friend of Hall's, pointing to that old tavern which stood near by.

"You shan't make a gallows of my sign," cried the publican, attempting to resist the determination of the crowd, who had assisted with a yell.

"Here's a rope!" shouted the friend of Hall, who had once professed friendship for Gordon, and who feared it might injure himself if he stood passive in the matter.

In an instant the rope was fastened round Gordon's neck. Several ineffectual attempts were made by many persons to throw it over the sign post. At last a negro boy of thirteen seized the end of it in his teeth and clambered up with it. He threw it over: hundreds below sprang to seize it. In a moment more the body of the murderer was jerked rapidly up, where it dangled in the night air not two feet from the likeness of Washington, which formed the sign of the tavern!

THE CONCLUSION.

The rest of our story is soon told. The awful death of Catharine produced a powerful effect upon the character of Miss Atherton. She postponed her marriage, and gave herself up to remorseful and sad reflections. It wrought a radical change in her heart. She abandoned her passion for seqnery, and wrote Pinckney, who had informed Langdale of his break with Fanny, the cause of that lady's conduct. True, however, to the last, to her own prided character, she averred that Fanny's sight of his letters was entirely accidental. This Fanny believed herself; and as Pinckney and she were soon reconciled, and more devoted than ever she so told him.

Pinckney, true again to his nature, never told Fanny of the depth of his first love—while she believed him irresistible; and had no doubt that Miss Atherton had loved him. That lady, whenever she alluded to Langdale, of her acquaintance with Pinckney abroad, always treated the matter as if Pinckney had entertained a boyish love for her, and that she honoured him in whim, until she found him serious. Though these parties were soon married, and live now intimate friends, the whole truth of the attachment which existed between Pinckney and Miss Atherton, has never been revealed to the lady of one or the lord of the other. Langdale esteems himself the happiest of men, and holds himself entitled now to speak more knowingly of the sex than ever.

Bronson and Elwood were never heard of definitely after they left the latter's house together. It was reported and believed, that a traveller in Kentucky, who knew Bronson well, had paid a visit to the penitentiary where he recognised him as a convict, sentenced upon several indictments for a great number of years, for passing counterfeit money. A New Orleans paper contained the other day a description of a man who was found murdered on the levee of that city. The description answered to Elwood's. It was thought he had been successful at the gaming table, and had been followed out by a ruffian who murdered and rifled him. What confirmed the opinion that the corpse was his, was the fact that his linen bore his initials.

The whole gang of counterfeiters was entirely broken up by the sagacity of Ross, and the treachery of Hall's wife, who by the connivance of her husband, had informed him of their manœuvres. Ross waited until liberal rewards were offered, before he explored the cave in the hills, which our readers may remember Gordon entered one night. There he detected most of the gang, who were visited by the law with a just punishment.

Deep and long was the consultation between Miss Rachellina and her brother upon Sidney's determination to marry Sarah Grattan. At last they concluded that certain branches of her family were certainly highly respectable, and that they had better say not a word in opposition to Sidney's wishes. Sarah Grattan, therefore, with restored health, soon gave him her hand, with as noble and gentle a heart with it as ever throbbed in a woman's bosom.

Miss Rachellina and Miss Bentley were much perplexed with the case of Robert Gammon and his cousin. All others were for having them married immediately. Not so, thought these,

ladies. Just, however, as they had come to the decision that they could not certainly be married now, at the instigation of Sidney Fitzhurst they went before Squire Norris, attended by aunt Agnes, and had the knot tied. Sidney Fitzhurst established them on a farm where Bobby has become thrifty and industrious—Pompey, now too old to drive the carriage, spends much of his time there, where he loves to officiate as the especial protector of a fine boy, of whom Peggy soon made Bobby's father. He, however, never fails to make dutiful reverence to his master each day, and inquire after his gout, which we are glad to learn is getting better.

Colonel Bentley has been so fortunate as to obtain a handsome settlement from his aunt, Miss Amelia Bentley, which has placed him above her caprices.

As for Miss Bentley and her friend Miss Rachellina, they have become greater gossips than ever; and they still persist in declaring, notwithstanding the many love adventures of which they have latterly had cognizance, that the chivalry of the tender passion is not what it was even in their short memories.

Aunt Agnes is still living in her little cabin. Sarah used all her influence to induce her to move to Holly, but she refused, though she is almost a daily visitor there.

Thompson was killed by one of his slaves, who made his escape to Canada. Pinckney has built himself a splendid mansion near Langdale's, in the city. There he spends his winters with his bride when they are not on a visit to the south. His summers are spent at Holly. It is rumoured in the literary circles that a novel, founded upon adventures abroad, which is soon to appear, is from his pen. Critical gentlemen who have seen the MS. speak very highly of it. And now, gentle reader, which of our couples think you are the happiest? Langdale and Miss Atherton, Pinckney and Fanny, Sidney and Sarah, or Bobby and Peggy? Knew I your character, I could tell—and this much I will say, that your life will be a bright one, though you are but as happy as the one you think the least happy—I hope it may be happier than the happiest. How part we—as friends? I have known you but so slightly, and at such long intervals, that I fear you will not claim me as an acquaintance, except upon this passing self-introduction, which will be as soon forgotten by you, and yet, by the light of my life's hope, I would rather win your smile than own broad acres—particularly if you are of the sex called the gentler.

At long intervals, but perchance with more thought than you will give me credit for, I have penned these idle pages for your amusement. Sometimes, where the crescent city New Orleans sits near the great ocean, amid the things of the voluptuous and the gay in that glorious city; and, sometimes, where St Louis lifts a head that will be the proudest in the west, and where I have known a hospitality nowhere more welcoming; sometimes, where Louisville, with Kentucky chivalry, greets the stranger; and sometimes, where queen city, Cincinnati, lords it over the beautiful Ohio, with law books round me; sometimes, in New York, the great mother of the empire state; and, sometimes here, in the city of Penn, which is neither last nor least in my affection, and where I write this now, where I have received a greeting so quiet and kind, that it seemed like a quaker birthright of which one cannot early dispossess themselves; amid all these places, with more cares upon my head than years—amidst much waywardness and as much gaiety, and more gloom and wildness than I'll tell of, though they're past, have I attempted to trace for thee a faint portraiture of the passions of our race, as we see them in our daily intercourse.

Hereafter, I trust we shall meet under different, and, on my part, happier auspices. Until then, dear reader, from my heart of hearts, I bid you an affectionate adieu.

THE END.

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